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THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE

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A. Giraudon.

JUSTINIAN TRIUMPHANT.

From an ivory in the Musée du Louvre, Paris.

The Emperor in ancient martial attire rides in state attended by figures (apparently) emblematic of Peace and Plenty, while a Persian does homage at his side, and beneath, the nations of the East bring tribute. On the left a martial figure offers a statuette of victory. The Emperor's face gives the impression of age, and the date may be about 556 (end of second Persian War).

THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE

THE REARGUARD OF EUROPEAN CIVILIZATION

BY

EDWARD FOORD

WITH 32 FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

LONDON
ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK
1911

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TO THE MEMORY OF

SIR PERCY BUNTING,

MY GODFATHER IN LITERATURE

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PREFACE

THIS volume is an attempt to supply the need of a short popular history of the Later Roman Empire. There is at present, I believe, no book on the subject in the English language between Professor Oman's sketch in the 'Story of the Nations' series and monumental works like those of Gibbon, Finlay, and Bury. The Early Middle Age of Europe has always had a fascination for me, and on the wonderful story of the 'Byzantine' Empire I have concentrated much attention. When, therefore, Mr. Gordon Home broached the idea of the present volume, I readily undertook the task, believing that a knowledge of what was required, combined with a real enthusiasm for my subject, might enable me to produce a book which would fill the gap.

For me this work is only a preface to a larger one, embodying the results of my own original research, which I hope in the future to produce. I had the advantage of reading Dr. Bussell's first volume on the Roman Empire before publication; the second appeared when this book was nearing completion.

The orthography of the innumerable proper names has given a good deal of trouble, and I should not like to say that I have solved the problem. As regards chronology, I have generally followed Bury.

The Maps are all from the author's drawings. That of the Roman Empire in 395 is based upon

the one in Kiepert's Atlas. The remaining five constitute, I believe, the first real attempt to illustrate the strange territorial fluctuations of the Empire on a rational principle. In every case the culmination of a particular epoch has been chosen. The Maps are supplemented by carefully compiled statistical tables, which may serve to give the reader a concrete idea of the extent of the domain of Imperial Rome. The Map of the Hellenic Colonies was added at the suggestion of Mr. Gordon Home, and I must thank him for much valuable assistance in the matter of the illustrations.

Little space has been wasted on ecclesiastical controversies, these being, in my opinion, entirely secondary to the Empire's work as preserver of civilization and rearguard of Europe. I have not hesitated to express the opinion that Byzantine cruelty is largely a myth, and otherwise it may be found that my estimate of certain rulers differs from that which commonly prevails.

Four of the genealogical tables have been copied or adapted from those in Professor Bury's work; the fifth and sixth were compiled with the assistance of my friend Mr. R. M. Cuningham, a fellow-enthusiast in things Byzantine, whose painstaking kindness I cannot too warmly acknowledge. Nor must I forget to thank Miss Marguerite Cartal for aiding me in the compilation of what, I hope, is a satisfactory index.

I have elsewhere discussed and defended the use, for popular purposes at least, of the adjective 'Byzantine,' and do not need to do so here.

EDWARD FOORD.

October, 1911.

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PRINCIPAL GREEK COLONIES
800 - 600 B.C.
Mother Cities or States.....MEGARA
Daughter Cities.....Byzantium
Megarean Colonies underlined.
CIMMERIANS
Tanais
Panticapaeum
Phanagoria
Olbia
Tyras
Heraclea Chersonesus
Dioscurias
Phasis
Istrus
Trapezus
Sinope
Odessus
Mesembria
THRACE
Byzantium
Heraclea Pontica
URARTU
Selymbria
Chalcedon
Lampsacus
Cyzicus
Cardia
Sestos
Abydos
MACEDONIA
Chalcidice
Potidaea
LYDIA
PHRYGIA
PHOCAEA
ERYTHRAE
CLAZOMENAE
CARIA
MILETUS
CHALCIS
ERETRIA
LOCRIS
MEGARA
ACHAEA
CORINTH
PAMPHYLIA
RHODES
CILICIA
ASSYRIA
CYPRUS (Phoenician and Greek)
PHOENICIA
SYRIA
CRETE (Greek)
GAULS
ETRURIA
ILLYRIA
Massalia
Kyme
Neapolis
Dicaearchia
Posidonia
SARDINIA
Hydrus
Tatas
Callipolis
Sybaris
Corcyra
Croton
Locri
Zancle
Rhegium
Mylae
Naxos
Himera
Catane
Selinus
Leontini
Megara
Acragas
Syracuse
Gela
PHOENICIAN COLONIES
Cyrene
EGYPT

THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE

THE REARGUARD OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

CHAPTER I

BYZANTIUM AND CONSTANTINOPLE—THE PEERLESS CAPITAL

IN the eighth and seventh centuries before Christ the Eastern Mediterranean was bidding fair to become a veritable network of Greek city-states. Never were there such colonizers as these men who had come down from the north and settled on the ruins of the far-famed sea-kingdom of Minos, whose glory they were destined to rival and surpass. Perchance the renown of the Minoan Empire, of which they must have heard, spurred them to emulation; perchance they were forced seaward, like other peoples before and since, by pressure from behind. Domestic political troubles undoubtedly played their part in the formation of many of the settlements which covered the shores of the Levant; but when every circumstance is taken into full con-

Byzantium and Constantinople

For several centuries after its foundation Byzantium had an eventful and, on the whole, a prosperous and honourable career. A glance at the map shows its splendid commercial position: it controlled the great trade route between the Ægean and the Euxine. Its vast importance as a frontier fortress between the Orient and the Occident showed itself in the great struggle between Greece and Persia; it was more than once taken and retaken. With comparatively few and brief intervals, it maintained its independence until it fell, with its sisters in East and West, under the all-embracing sway of Rome, and for centuries thereafter it was one of the most important cities of the central regions of the Empire. But evil days began for the famous old city on the death of Commodus in 192, when it became the frontier outpost of Pescennius Niger, in his struggle with Septimius Severus. It was taken by Severus in 196, and the grim Emperor took his revenge for its two years' desperate resistance by massacring the garrison and magistrates, confiscating the property of the citizens, depriving the place of its privileges, and dismantling the walls. Rome owed somewhat to strong L. Septimius Severus, but to mercy and scruple he was a stranger, and probably Caracalla did not inherit all his evil qualities from his mother.

Caracalla restored its privileges to the stricken city, but peace knew it not for many years. It was harassed by Gothic raids; it was involved in civil wars. In 263 it was stormed and sacked by Gallienus. Yet its commercial importance was so great that it soon recovered itself, though we are

Sébah & Joaillier.

THE TRIPLE WALL OF CONSTANTINOPLE NEAR THE GOLDEN GATE.

The low outer wall has disappeared, but the first and second are still in good preservation, and the huge ditch is a formidable obstacle.

told that scarce a single man of the old Megarean strain survived the slaughter of 196 and 263. Under the Illyrian Emperors it again enjoyed an interval of repose, and Diocletian's residence at Nicomedia must have greatly added to its prosperity. But on his abdication Byzantium again became a bone of contention between Licinius, Cæsar of Illyricum, and Maximinus Daza of the East. The latter, in 314, treacherously seized it behind his colleague's back, only to lose it again in the same year, and to be finally overthrown by Licinius. Licinius, now master of the entire East, greatly strengthened his recovered possession, and made it the strongest fortress of his Empire. There now remained, of the various competitors who had disputed the Empire after the abdication of Diocletian, two only—Licinius and Flavius Valerius Constantinus, Emperor of the West. Causes of rivalry and enmity were not lacking, and in 323 came to a head in open war. Licinius was defeated and slain, and Byzantium for the last time taken, this time by the man who was to make it famous for evermore, for in 328 Constantine finally decided to make it the capital of the Roman Empire.

The reasons which led him to supersede the City of the Tiber need only be briefly mentioned. A short study of the map of the Mediterranean basin is sufficient to demonstrate them. Rome was a bad position from which to direct the defence of the Danubian frontier, the most vulnerable part of the Roman border. It had been a splendid starting-point for the conquest of Italy, largely because it was the point of meeting of three nations, but as the

capital of the Empire it was full of defects. It had no proper communication with the sea ; it was shut off from the main body of the State by the great barrier of the Alps. Finally, all through the third and fourth centuries the centre of political gravity was shifting steadily eastwards ; it is doubtful whether it had not begun to do so long before. Rome had already lost all but the superstitious reverence which was paid to it as the legendary Mistress of the World ; it seems to have had little or no commercial importance. It was only a vast assemblage of magnificent public buildings and streets, surrounded by walls that, for all the use they were, had better never have been built, inhabited by a huge debased, pauperized population—a mere source of endless trouble and expense.

The merits of Byzantium were apparent to none more clearly than to Constantine, who had been encamped outside it for nearly a year, and had ample time to appreciate at their full value its many advantages. It lay on the border-line between East and West, and right on one of the most important of the great trade routes. Its military position was exceptionally fine. Not only was it tactically almost impregnable, if properly fortified and guarded, but it was a strategic centre of the first order, an unrivalled place of arms for war on land and sea. On the Asiatic side it was covered by the great wet ditch of the Bosphorus, impassable to any enemy not possessed of a navy. Even if Chalcedon and Chrysopolis were lost, the power which held Byzantium, so long as it maintained a naval force, was still unassailable. On the side of Europe, Hæmus and Rhodope

covered Thrace and Byzantium if the line of the Danube were forced ; and the city, at the end of its long dwindling peninsula, was the natural base for advance and goal of retreat, the true centre and rallying-point of the strength of the Empire.

We need not deal with the supposed marvels that are said to have attended the second foundation of Byzantium. All through 328 and 329 the work went steadily on, and on May 11, 330, the city was solemnly dedicated and consecrated—with Christian ceremonies, though Constantine was yet unbaptized. It was renamed 'New Rome' by imperial edict, but from the very first the name of its founder clung to it, and for sixteen centuries the world has stoutly refused to give the City of the Bosphorus any other title than that of Constantinople. The name of the first Christian Emperor of Rome has most rightly been ever associated with that of the city which he chose from among many as the capital of his Empire, while with the appellation of the State which centred in it is justly connected the name of the Megarean leader who colonized the unrivalled site which the blind men before him had neglected for Chalcedon.

Constantinople as planned by Constantine did not cover the area over which it spread in after-years. The length of its walls was barely eight miles, and the extent of ground enclosed only half of what it afterwards became. In 413 the great Prefect Anthemius began the construction of a new line of fortifications on the landward side, from three-quarters of a mile to a mile in advance of the Constantinian Wall. This was ruined by an earthquake

in 447, at a moment of extreme peril, when the terrible Attila was but a few marches away; but in sixty days the shattered barrier was defensible once more, and soldiers, citizens, and craftsmen, were labouring feverishly at the construction of a second wall in front of the first. In succeeding years the work was completed, and in the days when the warrior Marcianus and the saint Pulcheria again renewed the glory of the Empire the great capital stood forth in all its splendour and enduring strength. The length of its fortifications extended to about thirteen miles. From the Marble Tower on the Propontis to the Xylo Porta on the Golden Horn stretched for four miles a vast bulwark of defence. For the greater part of its length it was triple. First came a huge moat, 60 feet wide and at least 20 feet deep, with a low stone wall or breastwork along its inner edge. Behind the breastwork was —and is—an esplanade about 40 feet wide, overlooked by the Outer (really the Second) Wall, a structure from 25 to 30 feet high and 7 feet thick, strengthened by casemates on its inner side, with towers about 40 feet in height projecting at short intervals. The earth was banked up against its inner side, and levelled to form a second esplanade, averaging 60 feet in width, from the city side of which rose the Inner Wall, a huge barrier 45 feet from base to battlement, rising in places to 50 feet or more, with a solid thickness of about 15 feet, and with ninety-seven towers along its front, projecting about 30 feet into the peribolos, or esplanade, and rising to an average height of over 60 feet. This gigantic system of fortifications did not extend quite

to the Golden Horn, but ended at the Xylokerkus Gate, a quarter of a mile short of it, whence a single wall extended like a bastion round the quarter of Blachernæ. This single wall, however, extended and strengthened by several Emperors, was of great strength and solidity, and, though undefended by a ditch, appeared so strong to Mohammed II. in 1453 that he did not care to direct his attack against it. The entire shore-line along the Golden Horn and the Propontis was defended by walls, lower and weaker than the vast landward bulwarks, of course, but strengthened by some 300 towers, and, as events showed, strong enough for all purposes, except the unforeseen chance of a total lack of ships and trained defenders.

The Imperial Palatial Enclosure lay at the eastern end of the city, along the Propontine shore. In a work of the small dimensions of the present one, space would be wasted in attempting any description. It was more of what in Russia is called a *kreml* than a palace, containing several imperial residences, and a number of churches, barracks, armouries, store-houses, and extensive gardens and playing-fields. Beneath its walls on the city side lay the two famous churches of The Divine Wisdom and of St. Irene, the Hippodrome, and the Palace of the Patriarch; while before its main gate opened the 'Augustaeon,' or Imperial Square, from which the main thoroughfare of the city ran westward for more than a mile, traversing the Fora of Constantine and Theodosius, and presently dividing into two branches, one passing north-westward to the Gate of Adrianople, by the great church of The Holy Apostles, the mausoleum

of the Emperors; one running parallel to the Propontine shore to the famous Golden Gate, beneath whose arches conquering Emperors entered in triumphal procession the city of their pride. The means do not exist of mapping or describing the city in the days of its greatest prosperity, which were probably in the tenth century; but only a hundred years after its foundation it counted over 250 large public buildings and 4,400 private dwellings belonging to wealthy or distinguished citizens. A feature of the city was the gigantic reservoirs for the public water-supply. Valens constructed an aqueduct which was broken in the great siege of 626, and restored by Constantine VI. more than a century later. Churches were to be counted probably by the hundred rather than the score; many yet survive, desecrated and defiled by the presence of the barbarians who are still encamped in the city of Constantine—among them the wondrous Sancta Sophia and St. Irene; but the Church of the Holy Apostles was destroyed to make way for the mosque of the conqueror Mohammed II., as the imperial palaces and hundreds of other buildings of antiquarian and historical interest were swept away either by barbarous Europe or barbarous Asia in the ruin and desolation that supervened after the sack of 1204.

The suburbs of the great capital were Galata across the Golden Horn, Chrysopolis and Chalcedon on the Asiatic shore of the Bosphorus. The great port was, of course, the Golden Horn, but on the Propontine side there were four basins of larger or smaller size, one of which, however, belonged exclusively to the Imperial Palace.

It is impossible to estimate the population with any certainty. It is supposed at the present day to be about or over 1,000,000, but of course no reliance can be placed upon Turkish returns. The area of the Stambouline Peninsula is about 4,000 acres, according to the writer's very rough calculations, which at the rate—a high one as compared with that of London—of 100 inhabitants per acre would give a population of 400,000. Many writers estimate it at 1,000,000 or more, but I do not see that it can ever have greatly exceeded 500,000. It is true that the city parks and pleasure-gardens, then as now, were without the walls, but there were many large squares and unoccupied spaces within them. Possibly, allowing for the denser crowding which prevailed in antiquity, and the population of the Asiatic and European suburbs, there may have been at times as many as 700,000 inhabitants.

Of the city's wealth there can be no doubt. For several centuries it was the commercial capital of Europe and of a considerable part of Asia, and for a great part of that period it had no foreign rival. Benjamin of Tudela thinks that in the twelfth century, when the Italian republics were already competing with it, its yearly contribution to the imperial revenue was 7,300,000 nomismata (over £4,000,000). Gibbon can hardly credit this; from the standpoint of the eighteenth century he cannot be blamed for his incredulity. But it is quite probable. Constantinople was to the Empire what London is to Britain, only more so, for during a large part of its existence it had few foreign rivals, or none; and there was no city in the Byzantine

dominions to approach it, far less to equal it. It was the terminus of the chief routes of the Empire. It lay upon a main artery of medieval commerce, and the ruin in Western Europe drove trade and industry more and more to the East, thus adding to its already great commercial prosperity. It was the greatest fortress, the greatest naval station, the greatest arsenal, of the State ; its chief University, its religious centre, its seat of government, its commercial focus ; in short, as few cities have ever been or can be, the true natural centre of the Empire, its Queen of Cities, the heart and soul of its national existence—indeed a peerless capital.

A. Giraudon.

PART OF IVORY DIPTYCH OF A ROMAN CONSUL IN 518.

From the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

Each Consul, on assuming his now merely nominal office, had a diptych executed of himself in his insignia.

CHAPTER II

CONSTANTINE TO ARCADIUS—BARBARIAN INFLUENCE: A.D. 337-408

The Roman Empire after the death of Constantine I.—Gothic invasions—Theodosius I.—Internal condition of the Empire—Arcadius—Rufinus, Eutropius, and Gainas—Defeat and death of Gainas—John Chrysostom and Ælia Eudoxia—Death of Arcadius.

IT is not proposed here to do more than to give the slightest possible sketch of the history of the period (337-395) between the death of Constantine the Great and the accession of the brothers Arcadius and Honorius. It was an epoch of considerable interest and importance, but it lies outside the limits which I have laid down, arbitrarily I own; and the time which would be expended in describing the deeds of Constantius the Arian and Julian the Apostate is better employed in attempting to throw some light on the general state of the Empire at this period. It is necessary to glance at the events of these years, however, in order to understand something of the circumstances which, directly or indirectly, brought about the great changes of the following century.

Constantine left the Empire portioned out between

three sons, but by 353 the whole huge heritage had once more been concentrated in the hands of Constantius II., Emperor of the East. He is chiefly noted for having broken with the orthodox standard of Christianity, and having adopted the Arian heresy, which denied the Divinity of Christ, and for this reason has incurred considerable obloquy. He was unamiable, harsh, and unsympathetic—as, indeed, his whole house appear to have been—but was by no means devoid of the great ability which went hand in hand with their evil qualities. To him succeeded, in 361, that strange and, to the writer at least, pathetic figure, Julian the Apostate, and on his death in Persia, in 363 (after a brief interval of Jovianus, the hasty and ill-advised choice of the imperial staff), the stout soldier Valentinian I. Valentinian chose the West as his sphere of operations, and crowned his brother, Valens, Emperor of the East. Valens has not a good reputation in history; but it really seems as if, with all his faults, it was not he who was to blame for the disasters which befell the East under his rule, but bad and selfish officialdom.

The Goths were now definitely settled in the regions north of the Danube and the Black Sea. The Visigoths lay spread over what had been the old Roman province of Dacia, and were steadily drawing nearer to the Empire, becoming less and less of a danger, more and more of what we should now term a 'buffer state.' Their young men enlisted freely in the Roman armies, and, since the nation mustered more than 200,000 vigorous males, formed a most important source of strength to the declining

Empire—declining chiefly, it must be remembered, by reason of its steadily dwindling population. The Goths were, nominally at least, Christians; they had become cultivators, and in some cases traders; there certainly was no reason to believe that they were to be before long the most terrible enemies of the Empire. Probably most men of the later fourth century would have pointed to Persia as the great antagonist of Rome, and would have indicated the Rhine, the Euphrates, or Britain, as the points of danger, rather than the Lower Danube.

Somewhere about 210 B.C., if the writer's conclusions are correct, the consolidation of China into a single powerful State under that giant among rulers, Cheng of the Kingdom of Ch'in—'Ch'in-chi-huang-ti'—had opposed a firm barrier to the eastward progress of the peoples of Central Asia. Prominent among these peoples were the 'Hiung-nu,' a race mentioned again and again in terms of terror and respect by Chinese writers. Ch'in-chi-huang-ti defeated them in 215, and constructed on his northern border, where Nature had placed no barrier, an artificial one, a gigantic military frontier, the Great Wall of China, the hugest structure—reckoned as mere mass, and taking no account of the engineering feats involved—that human hands have ever reared. The result of this astounding creation of genius was, as seems perfectly clear to me, to gradually force the Hiung-nu westward. That they gave way very slowly, and that the gradual migration or infiltration of their hordes across the great Eurasian plains took some centuries rather than generations, is natural enough; they were probably

loath to leave the vicinity of the rich lands which had once been their raiding-ground, and must have had to fight every mile of their long journey westward. And though this is not the place wherein to take up the question of the origin of the Huns, I must own that it seems curious that the Romans of the fifth century should have known the terrible Mongol horde, which nearly made an end of their dissolving Empire, by a name which is almost the same as that of the nation which had terrorized China under the Chau Dynasty seven centuries before.

The hideous aspect of the Mongol hordes, their ferocity and bestiality, seem to have utterly cowed the fine German races with which they came in contact. The Ostrogoths were subjugated; the Visigoths, in terror and despair, retreated to the Danube, and begged the Roman garrisons to let them pass. After some hesitation Valens assented; the Goths crossed the great river and were fairly in Roman territory. There were, doubtless, difficulties, but none that could not be smoothed over by care and considerate treatment; but care was the last thing to be expected from the greedy and unscrupulous Roman officials. The details may be gathered from Ammianus, but it must suffice here to say that the Goths were literally goaded into war by treatment such as even slaves were scarce likely to endure without murmuring. Their patience was admirable; it was not until Lupicinus, the scoundrelly Governor of Mœsia, actually proceeded to attempt the murder of the Gothic chief, Fritigern, and some of the nobles, that the long-suffering

Teutons took up arms in 376. Next year they ravaged Mœsia and measured swords with the army of Illyricum in a fierce battle at Ad Salices; and in 378 they passed the Balkans, wasted Thrace, and shattered the imperial army of the East into ruin at Adrianople. Valens was slain, and with him lay dead the Magistri Equitum et Peditum, the Count of the Palace, 35 generals, and 40,000 officers and men.

The disaster was a fearful one, yet the Goths made no special use of it. They were not a disciplined and organized force, but a 'nation-army'; the tens of thousands of splendid warriors were accompanied and hampered by vast crowds of non-combatants, and by endless trains of heavy and clumsy waggons. Despite their magnificent victory, they could not take Adrianople, and, passing it by, poured down the Thracian promontory to Constantinople. Only forty years after the death of Constantine, the prescience which had chosen Byzantium as the new capital received its first justification. The oncoming host of victorious warriors gazed in silent dismay upon the great city and its massive fortifications, and, abandoning the siege-train which they had gathered for the assault, retreated inland. Constantinople had saved itself and the Empire.

The Spaniard Theodosius, who, by the choice of Gratian, Emperor of the West, succeeded the unfortunate Valens, took up again the policy of conciliation, but with less prospect of ultimate success, since, deprived of a great part of the military strength which had been at the disposal of

his predecessor, he held a much less commanding position. The Goths were settled in the Illyrian provinces, and the danger of their renewed hostility was averted—only temporarily, as it turned out—by the expedient of enlisting their horsemen wholesale in the army. Considering that Theodosius had hardly any other alternative, the plan was not, perhaps, a bad one; had he lived ten years longer it might have been a permanent success, but he undoubtedly carried it too far. Under his system the pay of a Gothic trooper was higher than that of his native comrade; that is, the Emperor practically published the fact that the Goths were better and more reliable troops than the born subjects of the Empire. It may have been true, though I see no especial reason for thinking so, but it was surely folly to admit it. The Goths found themselves and their tribal chiefs in many respects the rulers of the Empire's destiny, and their probably high opinion of themselves was greatly raised; while the natives, neglected and disregarded, became steadily less efficient. Otherwise the policy had evil results in that it greatly increased the military expenditure at a time when the most careful economy in every department was urgently demanded. On this subject I shall have more to say shortly; but taking all the unfavourable circumstances of the times into consideration, the facts remain that there was plenty of good fighting material among the peoples of the Empire; that the loss of revenue was hardly likely to be fatal even if 50,000 Isaurians or Illyrians had been levied from the taxpayers to fill the chasm made in the ranks of the army by the

catastrophe of Adrianople; that a diminution of revenue would probably have injured the Empire less than the increased taxation necessary to pay the Goths; and that, finally, the success of the policy rested upon the life of Theodosius. A policy contrived upon such a fragile basis as human existence has but a very uncertain chance of continuance.

In other ways, too, Theodosius cannot be described as in any sense an Emperor of exceptional merit. He was certainly an able general; he was active and hard-working. But he had no true conception of the needs of the times; his measures were calculated rather to add to the public burdens than to relieve them, and he can hardly be defended against the charge of reckless cruelty—witness the shocking incident of the massacre at Thessalonica. He owes his title of 'Great' to his orthodoxy, not to his merits as a ruler; we shall meet with more than one similar instance later on. The chaos which set in after his death is perhaps a good testimony to his merits, but is equally his condemnation. We cannot applaud a sovereign whose work—in not the worst of circumstances by any means—can only endure for his own lifetime.

Theodosius left the Empire to his two young sons, Arcadius, eighteen years of age, and Honorius, who was only ten. To the former was left the East, the main strength of the State; to the latter, the much weaker and less prosperous West; and both were surrounded by a number of generals and ministers, almost all of barbarian or half-barbarian origin. The two young Emperors were almost absolute nonentities. Arcadius was a thin, dark,

nerveless stripling, always seemingly half asleep, and without energy even to speak. Honorius is best remembered by the famous story of his pet fowl 'Roma.' Considered as rulers, there is little to choose between them; both were certain to be the tools and dupes of any ambitious and unscrupulous minister.

The internal condition of the Roman Empire at the death of Theodosius was full of danger; but, though the situation was critical, an Emperor like Diocletian, or even a mere resolute fighting man, might well have retrieved it. With two weak and almost idiotic boys on the throne, there was perhaps little to be looked for but disaster.

The imperial government had for centuries been steadily tending to become more and more centralized; and this tendency had been materially helped forward by the troubles of the third century. The reorganization of Diocletian marked an attempt to secure the advantages of decentralization by dividing the vast Empire into four great regions, each with its chief, but the finely-conceived scheme hardly survived the abdication of its author. Four Emperors of varying blood and capacity were little likely to be able to work in harmony; dissension soon broke out, and ended in the accession of Constantine I. to supreme power. Constantine continued the reorganization which Diocletian had initiated. One main feature of Diocletian's system—a strange one when we consider that its author was a peasant by birth—was the placing of the Emperor in a position of unapproachable majesty. No doubt Diocletian hoped thus to establish some kind of check upon the

constant military revolts which threatened the public stability; he wished, in short, to elevate the head of the State to a position of earthly isolation and glory which should in some degree co-ordinate with his theoretical half-religious place in the economy of the Roman world as 'Divus Augustus.' The disadvantage that the Emperor might be so cut off from his subjects as to have slight conception of their needs and interests, he does not appear to have foreseen; at all events, he ignored it.

Diocletian's system, elaborated by Constantine, made necessary a splendid and expensive Court. The defence of the Empire against its enemies involved a huge increase in the standing army. The 300,000 troops kept up by Augustus had grown to over 600,000 in the time of Theodosius I. While the weight of taxation was steadily on the increase, the population of the Empire was slowly wasting all through the first four centuries of the Christian era.

In a society whose normal condition is that of intermittent war, it is clear that the small freeholder is at a great disadvantage beside his large-holding neighbour, who can till his fields with hired or slave labour in time of hostilities, while he himself must leave his farm more or less uncared for. If both be spoiled by an enemy, the greater proprietor retains the advantage, since he can utilize his greater means to recuperate. In course of time the small holder is crowded or wasted out of existence. This is little better than a truism; it has been so often demonstrated that I confine myself to repeating it. As early as 150 B.C., Italy was in a serious condition from depopulation owing to the above cause; and

reformers again and again made desperate attempts to check the evil, which were wrecked upon the bitter opposition of the great landowners. Under the Empire great numbers of the Italian people were State paupers, residing in Rome and maintained by State ministrations which absorbed a considerable proportion of the revenue. When Constantinople was founded, its people also were supported by State grants of food. The condition was a terrible one; but it is fair to remember that it was largely due, in the first case, to the grasping selfishness of great landowners, who would not allow their poor neighbours a chance to work and live.

Immorality of a bad type was distressingly common. The prevalence of slavery fostered self-indulgence and cruelty; infanticide was frequently practised. The strenuous efforts of the Emperors produced for a while a certain promise of better things; there was a considerable resuscitation of free labour, but the necessities of the fisc soon involved the free labourer in the toils of the caste system of the administration, which chained every man to his craft; and in the third century he was already a serf. Immorality the Emperors could not check—many of them, indeed, were guilty of it; and, partly from economic, partly from moral causes, the population was stationary at best, probably diminishing, while the conditions were against its recovery after any disaster. The great plague of the reign of Marcus Aurelius was the beginning of the end, and the anarchy of the third century helped it forward. In the fourth century, Roman society had become stereotyped

into castes rigidly defined, controlled by an all-pervading bureaucracy, and ground down by grievous and ever more grievous taxation.

The principal source of revenue appears to have been the land tax, which varied from a twentieth to a fifth of the value of the annual production of the soil, and was usually about a tenth—not a light burden at any time. All non-land-holding freemen were liable to a heavy capitation tax. Constantine, confronted with a deficit, closed it by imposing a class tax on senators, which was probably defensible; and a tax on all receipts, which necessarily pressed cruelly on the poor, and was repealed by Anastasius, amid general rejoicings.

The local assembly (Curia) was collectively responsible for the amount of the district taxes as fixed by the imperial officials. If any member of the Curia became bankrupt, the sum still had to be made up; and as it was too often impossible to wring it out of the poverty-stricken serfs, the other members were forced to contribute. The results were disastrous. At first the curiales acted in collusion with the provincial Governors, and occasionally escaped at the expense of the exchequer; but the ever-growing strictness of the tax-collectors gradually closed this outlet of evasion, and the wretched notables, tied to their estates and chairs as much as the serf was chained to his plot and his hut, had recourse to any and every means to escape their crushing responsibilities.

The principle of taxation was simply to collect in the treasury as much as possible of the circulating medium; other considerations were ignored.

Naturally, the result was lack of capital, consequent decrease in the means of life, and acceleration of the decline of the population. Taxpayers were sternly forbidden to bear arms, lest there should be a decline of revenue; and the army, when the supply of camp children failed, was recruited more and more from barbarians, until Theodosius I. put the capstone on its denationalization by swamping it with Goths, while he ground the wretched taxpayers still more into the dust, to provide his new favourites with high pay.

The curiales were landowners, but not of noble or senatorial rank; they represented the upper middle class—to use the clumsy modern term. Below them were few freemen save merchants and tradesmen; the agricultural labourers were almost all serfs or slaves. At its best the curial system was bad, for the Curia, being composed of the richest landowners of the district, was not identified in its interests with the smaller proprietors and the traders. The small holders disappeared first, but at last the curiales disintegrated under the ruthless pressure. The nobles probably evaded their obligation as far as possible; in any case they had the best chance of survival, and by the time of Valentinian III. the conditions in the West were appalling. The population was practically reduced to beggary. Vandal piracy had bankrupted many traders, barbarian ravages had ruined the small and medium landowners, but there was a group of nobles with incomes ranging from £60,000 up to £200,000 a year. Comment is needless. The East fared better: the economic conditions had never

been so bad; the trading classes were much larger and more influential than in the agricultural West; serfage was perhaps less widespread; finally, the country, in Asia at least, was untouched by war. The East, also, was blessed with stronger rulers. So, while the West broke into fragments, the East survived, and had enough of health within it to be able to recuperate, not once, but several times, to the astonishment of mankind.

The history of the reign of Arcadius is sufficiently dreary, but is on the whole less gloomy than that of his brother's rule over the West. He was at first under the domination of his ambitious minister Rufinus, but he soon fell under the influence of a eunuch, Eutropius, and a Gothic general, Gainas. Instigated by them, he espoused the half-barbarian daughter of the Frank chief Bauto, instead of Maria, the daughter of Rufinus, and the latter was soon assassinated at a review, by order of his enemies. Gainas next, in 401, ousted and murdered Eutropius, in spite of the intrepid defence of the fallen minister made by the famous John, Patriarch of Constantinople, whom the admiring populace called Chrysostom, 'the Golden-mouthed.'

Meanwhile the Illyrian provinces were in wild disorder. There Alaric, the famous Visigothic king, was in open revolt. The pretext of the rising was arrears of pay to the fœderati—the barbarian troops of the army—but there is little doubt that Alaric's ambition was the main cause. Stilicho, the great Vandal Magister Militum of the West, checked him; but, with the curious tortuous policy which so often fills us with doubt of his loyalty to the Empire, concluded

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peace without crushing his rival, and procured for him the post of Magister Militum per Illyricum. For five years Alaric remained comparatively quiescent, if by no means idle; then, in 401, while Gainas was plotting against Eutropius, he invaded Italy. With his operations there, his final success, and his death, we are not immediately concerned.

Possibly he had concerted measures with Gainas, who was now all-powerful in the East; but Gainas was not Alaric, nor had he the great host of splendid fighters which followed the Visigoth. The people of Constantinople, growing enraged at the insolence of the Germans, broke out into resistance. They closed the gates, cutting off Gainas and the troops outside from those within, and then, turning savagely on the latter, killed over 7,000 of them. Gainas now declared open war on his master, but he was met by Fravitta, a fine specimen of the hard-fighting, rough, honest, heathen Teuton. Fravitta stood by the son of his friend and lord Theodosius, defeated Gainas, and drove him across the Danube, where he was killed by Uldes, King of the Huns, who were now in force in Dacia.

The rest of the reign of Arcadius passed in comparative peace, except for continual trouble between John Chrysostom and the Empress Ælia Eudoxia. Neither side appears to great advantage. The Empress was impulsive, hot-tempered, vindictive with the fierceness of her barbarian nature, certainly vain and frivolous, but does not appear to have been fundamentally vicious. The Patriarch was a man of saintly life, disinterested, brave, universally beloved, but rash and impulsive, and most

violent in speech. He assailed the imperial lady to her face as she sat in Sancta Sophia. To be called Jezebel was more than she could endure, yet her violent impulses were as much good as bad, and she seems to have made repeated attempts to live on good terms with the saintly but impracticable priest.

A little gentleness might have converted the lovely hot-tempered Frank into a passionately faithful friend; but John's invective only grew fiercer as time went on. He had no tact, and, as it seems to the writer, no great share of Christian charity for comparatively slight faults. The end came in 404: Eudoxia, now utterly reckless, instigated her inert espouse into having the Patriarch arrested and banished. His patience under the hardships of his exile was wonderful, and there was deep pathos in his lonely death, but no one—except religious enthusiasts devoid of judgment—can help wishing that he had been able to control his violent impulses a little; the good which he would have accomplished would have far exceeded that which he was actually able to do, great as it undoubtedly was. The plea has been advanced by Kingsley that it was the utter badness and rottenness of the times that made the great contemporary Christian Fathers so intolerant, and often barbarous. It may be so, but it is a terrible indictment of Christianity, that in four centuries it had done so little. As a fact, the fourth and fifth centuries were a period of steady moral advance; there were both bad and good Emperors after Diocletian, but no one of the type of Nero or Caracalla. Theodosius I. conducted a veritable crusade against sexual immo-

rality; the Roman of A.D. 404 was decidedly more civilized than the Roman of 4 B.C.

The times may have been bad, but they were better than of old—in the moral sense, at least. Paganism existed, but it was moribund; Christianity may have had to fight hard, but it had done, and was to do, splendid and deathless work: it was not the wonderful religion that was at fault, nor yet the times; it was the violent ignorance, intolerance, and dissension, of narrow Christian ecclesiastics that retarded progress. 'St.' Cyril of Alexandria was almost certainly morally guilty of the murder of the pagan philosopher Hypatia, and his action does not appear to have been generally disapproved of. Chrysostom was a man of a far higher order than Cyril, yet he, too, was the slave of his prejudices, terribly devoid of the true spirit of Christianity.

Eudoxia did not long survive her enemy. Needless to say, she is supposed to have died in deep remorse and misery; the opponent of St. John Chrysostom could have no other fate. She died in childbirth in September, 405. On May 1, 408, Arcadius, whose affection for her seems to have been the single positive emotion of his otherwise inert existence, followed her. His last arrangements showed a degree of wisdom which he had never yet manifested. He appointed Anthemius, the Prætorian Prefect, a man of high ability and entire disinterestedness, regent for his little son Theodosius. He was laid beside his wife in the Church of the Holy Apostles.

THE ROMAN EMPIRE, A.D. 395.

Dioceses thus.....GALLIA

CHAPTER III

THEODOSIUS II. TO JUSTIN I.—REORGANIZATION: A.D. 408-527

Regency of Anthemius—Reign of Theodosius II.—Pulcheria—Eudocia—Persian and Hunnic Wars—Intervention in the West—Chrysaphius—Hunnic invasions—Religious troubles—Pulcheria and Marcianus—Revival—Repulse of Huns—Council of Chalcedon—Leo I.—Zeno—Decline of barbarian influence—Anastasius I.—Internal reforms—Isaurian and Persian Wars—Revolt of Vitalian—Justin I.—Justinian, his character and curious marriage; his accession.

THE death of Arcadius in some sense synchronizes with the passing away of the epoch of barbarian influence. Such a general statement, of course, must only be considered as partially correct. Barbarian influence continued to exist for a very considerable period at Constantinople. The Alan Magister Militum Ardaburius and his son Aspar were powerful, and later showed signs of becoming dangerously so; but though Aspar may perhaps be reckoned in the same category with Stilicho and Ricimer, he never really exercised their commanding influence; neither can it be said with any truth that the Ostrogoth chieftains Theodoric, with whom we shall presently become acquainted, had much chance of dominating the Empire, though they certainly

appeared likely at one time to establish a Teutonic kingdom in the Balkan Peninsula. The darkest day of the Later Roman Empire has passed, and with Theodosius II. we enter upon a period of transition to the epoch of reform which was to bear its part in the burst of energy under Justinian I.

The Prætorian Prefect Anthemius proved himself worthy of his dead master's unexpectedly wise choice. No taint of self-interest marked his conduct, a feature so rare as to deserve special mention, though Anthemius had done nothing else worthy of record. Such, however, was far from the case; he concluded an advantageous commercial treaty with Persia; when Uldes, King of the formidable Huns, invaded Mœsia, he drove him across the Danube, and protected the border by systematic refortification, supported by a flotilla on the great river. He set on foot measures for resuscitating the wasted Illyrian provinces. He reorganized the corn-supplying machinery of the capital, and traced out, and in large measure constructed, new fortifications for the capital, nearly a mile in advance of the walls of Constantine, thus wellnigh doubling the size of the city. But his greatest glory was that in 414 a general remission of arrears of taxes for forty years (from 368 to 408) was proclaimed. To the burdened taxpaying classes, who must have been overwhelmed with their obligations, this cannot but have been of inestimable benefit. The great Prefect died in 414, but it was clearly his influence, if not his actual personal order, that was responsible for the boon.

He had conferred another benefit on the Empire

E. Alinari.

IVORY OF THE EMPRESS EUDOCIA.

From the National Museum, Florence.

Probably the unhappy Eudocia II., daughter of Theodosius II. and Eudocia I., and wife of Valentinian III. (423–455), Emperor of the West.

by the careful education which he had caused to be imparted to his imperial charges. Theodosius II., indeed, was only a little less of a nonenity than his father; but his sister Pulcheria, two years his senior, was a very different person. On the death of Anthemius, possibly, or indeed probably, by his influence and advice, she was proclaimed Augusta, and took up the reins of government in the name of her brother, being then only fifteen years of age. Women mature earlier in the East than under our own cloudy skies, and Pulcheria was not so young as her scanty tale of years might seem to indicate; but there is something infinitely touching in the spectacle of this girl taking up her terrible burden of empire at an age when even Eastern women were thinking of the enjoyments of youth. Pulcheria took religious vows, and remained a virgin to the end of her life (her marriage at the age of fifty was merely nominal). It may very well have been a genuine religious impulse; but seeing that her sisters Marina and Arcadia both followed her example, and that the daughters of the fiery Eudoxia were hardly likely to have been devoid of human passion, it more probably originated in the desire of the Augusta to remove herself and her sisters beyond the reach of ambitious aspirants to their hands. The latter theory is at once the more probable and the more honourable. It is more probable, because Pulcheria never secluded herself; she toiled diligently at State business all her life, and she assuredly had little leisure for ceremonial mortification of the flesh; she did what few women could do or have done—she kept her vow of

virginity in the world. It is the more honourable, because monachism is too often another name for mere selfishness of the worst sort, a desire to save the individual soul, with utter disregard of anything else. Pulcheria's vow was for the good of humanity; had she remained free she might well have been a centre for plots against her brother; her self-abnegation secured the peace of the Roman world in the East. Her motives were indeed religious in the highest and noblest sense of the word, since her object was purely unselfish—the benefit of her fellow-creatures. In all her life there is not a sign that she ever took herself into consideration; she toiled only for her brother; her existence was a long self-denial; more than once it must have been very like a martyrdom. Her sisters, who followed her example, have every right to share in her fame, though they do not appear to have mingled to any extent in public life.

The long reign of Theodosius the Younger was on the whole peaceful. Its great monument was the Codex Theodosianus, which was commenced in 429, and completed in 438. Its inception may be set down with certainty to the credit of Pulcheria and the senators who worked with her at the task of reorganizing the Empire; the value of a systematic codification of the laws needs no emphasizing. The Augusta is said also to have set her face steadily against the corruption of the Court. Here, however, she was face to face with an Augean stable, and her efforts to cleanse it were only partially successful. She failed, as any woman in similar circumstances must fail, to see the crying need of military

reorganization; the Roman armies continued to be assemblages of barbarian fœderati and mercenaries, led by barbarian or half-barbarian chiefs like Ardaburius and Aspar, whose fidelity was always doubtful. Yet for the present there was no trouble. The House of Theodosius was popular with the Teutons; the Augusta's personal influence may have counted for much—at any rate, there is no hint of mutiny during her reign. We must always remember that Pulcheria owed much to the precepts of Anthemius, and we do not know how much of her policy was really his; but in any case she deserves credit for intelligently carrying it out, and the glory of having kept her weak brother steady in a dignified course of action for many years is all her own.

Pulcheria very early in life had taken into her friendship a Greek girl named Athenais, who had fled penniless from the persecution of her brothers at Athens to seek the protection of the young Augusta. Athenais was a daughter of the philosopher Leontios; she was also a pagan, a fact which is worth recording, to show how far removed Pulcheria was from bigotry. The young Athenian was converted to Christianity, and baptized by the name of Eudocia. Theodosius fell in love with her, and in 421, being then twenty years of age, he took her to wife. He was so much influenced by his sister that we must assume the marriage to have had her strong approval; there is every reason to believe that she had been a good friend to the beautiful pagan, who had in her need cast herself at her feet years before. In after-years there was disagreement between the imperial ladies, but there is nothing to show that

there was any political reason for it. The children of the union, except a daughter who bore her mother's name, died young; and in 444 Theodosius separated from Eudocia, and exiled her to Jerusalem. The story grew up in after-years that the Empress was guilty of a criminal passion for Paulinus, one of the great Court officials; but the story of the Phrygian apple which Eudocia received from her husband, only to pass it on to her lover, probably belongs to the region of romance. At the same time the story is found in several Byzantine historians, and there was probably some reason for the divorce, by a normally good-natured man, of the wife with whom he had lived for twenty years.

In 421 war broke out with Persia. It lasted for two years, and terminated in favour of the Empire in 422. Its cause had really been the persecution of Christians carried on by King Bahram, and its successful issue strengthened the prestige of the Empire in the East, which had declined since Jovian's ignominious peace in 363. But next year, before the main body of the army had returned from the Persian frontier, the Huns broke into the Balkan Peninsula and ravaged the whole country north of Adrianople. The Government, unable to repel force by force, could only adopt the ignominious policy of buying them off by a yearly subsidy of 700 pounds of gold. The reason was that the army was needed for an expedition into the Western Empire, but the precedent was a bad one.

In the West, Honorius had died in 423. The government was seized or assumed (it must always be remembered that there was no definite law of

succession) by Johannes, the Primicerius or First Secretary. Placidia, stepsister of Honorius, and widow of his colleague Constantius III., was at the time living at Constantinople, whither intrigues at Ravenna had forced her to retire, and she now claimed the crown for her son Valentinian. The Eastern army, under the Ardaburius, entered Italy; and though he was himself shipwrecked and taken, his son Aspar stormed Aquileia, and Ravenna was surrendered without resistance. Johannes was captured and executed. The Eastern Empire was to receive as guerdon for its aid Western Illyricum, the cession to take place when Valentinian should be of age to marry Eudocia, the daughter of Theodosius. It was clearly wise policy to get as much of the shattered Empire as possible added to the still vigorous Eastern portion, but the Illyrian provinces were so wasted as to be of little value, and their possession by Theodosius was never more than nominal.

Valentinian III. and Eudocia were duly married in 436. The young Emperor was probably the worst of the line of Theodosius, vindictive, incapable, and faithless to a wife who seems to have loved him only too well. The marriage, however, marked the high-water mark of the prosperity of Theodosius II., and also the culminating-point of the influence of Pulcheria. There were always men who challenged her primacy in her brother's regard, but soon after 436 we begin to hear more and more of the eunuch Grand Chamberlain Chrysaphius. It was perhaps by his machinations that Eudocia was separated from her husband; it is certain that Pulcheria's hold on

her brother was becoming relaxed. The last ten years of the reign of Theodosius II., during which the ambitious eunuch was steadily becoming supreme, were dark and disastrous. An expedition against the Vandals, now firmly established in Africa under their great King Gaiseric, ended in ignominious failure; and in 441 Attila, King of the Huns, burst into the Illyrian provinces. He stormed every fortress along the Danube but one, and for several years worked his will in the Balkan Peninsula. Three Roman armies perished in Thrace and Mœsia; seventy cities were stormed and ruined. Negotiations were opened with the victorious barbarian in 443, but they soon fell through; and Attila, practically master of the waste that had been Eastern Illyricum, might have looked forward to the sack of Constantinople.

In 447 came the final blow. At the end of January an earthquake occurred in Eastern Europe and Asia Minor. Many cities suffered severely; great part of Constantinople was ruined, and nearly the whole of the landward wall, with fifty-seven towers, was overthrown.

The danger was appalling. The Huns were in Thrace; the loss of Constantinople would mean the end of all things for the Empire, but the wild energy of the people saved the State. Every craftsman in Constantinople was set to labour on the fortifications; the city-demes supplied 16,000 able-bodied citizens as labourers; in sixty days the wall of Anthemius was repaired and defensible, and a second rampart under construction in front of it. The city could not be easily taken now, even if the defenders had been

less numerous and desperate; Attila was not destined to enter either Old or New Rome.

But though Constantinople was saved, Theodosius and his ministers could not save themselves from the necessity of ratifying humiliating terms of peace. Attila was to retain the southern bank of the Danube; the Hunnish prisoners and deserters were to be sent back; Roman captives to be ransomed at 12 pounds of gold a head; 6,000 pounds of gold were to be paid at once, and an annual subsidy of 2,100 pounds. A great Empire could hardly have descended to lower depths of ignominy.

Matters were little better at home. The eunuch Chrysaphius was all-powerful at Court. Pulcheria had long been growing more and more helpless, and, probably in 447, she withdrew into private life. Arcadia had died in 444, in 449 Marina followed her, and during the last year of his life the Emperor was alone, divorced from his wife, estranged from the sister who had sacrificed her best years for him, far distant from his daughter in the West. Now religious strife was added to his troubles. It had been, in 431, necessary to hold a synod to deal with the heterodox Patriarch Nestorius; now, in 449, the monophysite heresy of Eutyches which maintained the existence of a single nature only in the Personality of our Saviour, raised its head. Chrysaphius was the godson of Eutyches, and the synod held at Ephesus to inquire into the question was packed with monophysites, who maltreated Flavian, Patriarch of Constantinople, and finally carried their point by sheer force. Leo, the famous Pope of Rome, whose Legate, Hilarius, barely

escaped with his life, aptly termed the meeting the 'Synod of Robbers'; but Theodosius confirmed its decision, and rent Christendom in twain. It was well that the domination of the evil eunuch was drawing to a close.

In July, 450, Theodosius, while following the chase, was thrown from his horse, and so terribly injured that he was carried back only to die. As he lay in agony, his thoughts turned from the fawning eunuch, who had been his evil genius, to one who, in the best years of his reign, had been ever at his side—who to serve him had foregone her hopes of motherhood. He sent for Pulcheria; and when she came to the imperial chamber, where the Angel of Death waited, the dying Emperor made his peace with the sister who had served him so faithfully, and solemnly commended her to the Senate as his successor.

A female ruler was an unheard-of thing in Roman annals. Pulcheria chose as her colleague a tried soldier and administrator, the patrician Marcianus, whom on August 24, 450, she solemnly married. The marriage was but a formal one; both bride and bridegroom were past middle life; Pulcheria would hardly break her vow. The nuptial ceremony was the sign of the comradeship of these two fine characters in their appointed task of reviving the apparently moribund Empire.

Their first act was to repudiate the disgraceful treaty with the Huns. It was a bold act, but it met with the success which sometimes waits on the brave. Chrysaphius was summarily put to death. Every effort was made to heal the schism in the Church.

Eutyches was degraded; and in 451 a General Council was held at Chalcedon, by which the monophysite heresy was solemnly condemned.

The Huns made an inroad into the Empire in 451, which was repelled with ease. It was probably only subsidiary to the gigantic invasion of the West which Attila carried out in this year, and which Aetius, Roman general and patrician, and Theodoric, King of the Visigoths, turned back on the Catalaunian Plain. In 452 an alliance was effected with the Western Empire; and next year Attila's last invasion, in which he desolated Northern Italy, was finally checked by Aetius—by the intercession of Pope Leo as legend declares, by the aid of the reinforcements which Marcianus had sent to the West as it appears in the sober light of history. If he really had Rome at his mercy, as we are required to believe, Leo could never have saved it. No one would rob the noble Bishop of his glory, but Aetius and Marcianus must receive their due.

Pulcheria died on September 11, 453. Marcianus survived her for a little more than three years, busy until the last in the work of reorganization. On the murder of the wretched Valentinian III. in 455 he became the legal head of the entire Empire, but he was too wise to assume direct control over the ruinous West. He accepted as colleague Avitus, who on the murder of Maximus, the successor of Valentinian, was preferred to the imperial diadem by the army and the Visigoths in Gaul. He made efforts to repeople the Balkan provinces by settling colonies of brave barbarians, hostile in feeling to the Huns, in the devastated lands along the Danube. After

the sack of Rome by Gaiseric in 455, he sent in succession two embassies to Carthage to endeavour to procure the release of the unhappy Empress Eudocia and her daughters. Both failed in their object, and Marcianus was preparing for war, when he died, in January, 457. He is said to have been poisoned by Aspar, but he had certainly been in failing health for some time previous to his death.

Be this as it may, Aspar undoubtedly did make a serious effort to play the part in the East which Ricimer was acting in the West. His Arian tenets made it somewhat difficult for him to seize the crown; possibly he lacked the requisite resolution and unscrupulousness; but his control over the army rendered him for the time all-powerful, and he procured the election as Emperor of Leo the Thracian, a man of considerable capacity, but the head of his own household. The new Emperor, however, showed himself possessed of independence and firmness, and manifested no signs of subordinating his policy to the ideas or ambitions of Aspar. He drew closer to the anti-Teutonic party in the Empire; he married his daughter Ariadne to Zeno the Isaurian, one of its leading members, and set himself quietly to reorganize the army by enlisting many new regiments from among the native populations. In 463 Zeno was created Magister Militum per Orientem, and the control of one of the strongest armies of the Empire was thus in the hands of a faithful friend. Still, Leo showed no unkindness or ingratitude to Aspar; he made his son—rather unwillingly and tardily, it is true—Cæsar, and the Alan general continued to be the foremost figure

in Constantinople, where he lived in great state for many years. But Leo steadily abstained from permitting him any great military command.

In 467 the Emperor, who had in 462 succeeded in obtaining the release by Gaiseric of the unhappy Empress Eudocia and her younger daughter, Placidia, sent a great expedition against the Vandals. It totalled about 100,000 men of all kinds, and 1,113 vessels; the total of the actual landing force may have been about 30,000. It was a far larger force than that which, sixty-six years later, was to conquer the Vandals, but Leo's distrust of Aspar induced him to give the command to Basiliscus, the incompetent brother of his wife Verina. The expedition was completely defeated, and its huge cost crippled imperial finances for a generation.

In 471 Aspar met his end. It is probable that he had been plotting against the Emperor, for Leo would hardly have proceeded to extremities without good reason, though it is true that the cause of his action may simply have been that these Alan soldiers were dangerous subjects. At any rate, Aspar and his son, the Cæsar Ardaburius, were executed—perhaps we should say assassinated; two younger sons of the general were spared. Leo's action was politically justifiable; he certainly showed no unnecessary lust of blood; but it cost him much of his popularity in the capital, where men called him in consequence 'Makelles' (Butcher).

In the same year we hear of a victory of the Roman army in Pontus, probably over a Hunnish host which had come round by the eastern shore of the Euxine. The rest of Leo's reign appears

to have passed in comparative peace. His financial administration was directed to relieving, as far as possible, the burdens of the taxpayers, and on the occasion of a severe shock of earthquake at Antioch he was quick to extend aid. His military measures have been noticed. He maintained the cause of orthodoxy in the Church, and for this reason, presumably, obtained the undeserved title of 'Great' from his ecclesiastical panegyricists. He died in 474, aged sixty-three, leaving an Empire decidedly improved in condition and prospects to his infant grandson, Leo II., the son of Zeno the Isaurian.

It was clear that the imperatorship of Leo II. was but nominal; with Zeno and Ariadne all real authority was certain to rest. The child was induced to formally abdicate in favour of his father, which, probably, was what the late Emperor expected, though he does not seem to have cared to offend his wife Verina and her brother Basiliscus, by formally naming the Isaurian his successor. Verina in 475 raised a revolt in the capital, and set up Basiliscus as Emperor. Zeno was forced to fly with his wife and his mother Lallis to Isauria. After a time the tide turned in his favour, and in 477 he was able to defeat the rebels and re-enter his capital. Basiliscus and his family were immured in a Cappadocian fortress, where they died of hunger and cold, and Zeno got rid of other dangerous persons by assassination. The last stronghold of the rebels, long beleaguered, was finally taken in 484.

For the greater part of his reign Zeno was troubled by the Ostrogoths. Zeno took the great

Gothic chief Theodoric, afterwards King of Italy, into his service, but in 479 he resolved to be no longer a traitor to his countrymen, and united their scattered bands against the Empire. In 483 Zeno conciliated him by conferring on him the title of Magister Militum, just as Arcadius had tried to conciliate Alaric; but he soon broke out again into hostility, and in 487 marched on Constantinople. He met with no success, however, and in 488 Zeno got rid of him by making him a grant of Italy. The series of ephemeral rulers in the West had ended in Italy with the deposition of Romulus Augustus in 476; and Odovacar, the barbarian Magister Militum, declined to accept Zeno's suggestion that Julius Nepos of Dalmatia should be Emperor of the West. He formally acknowledged Zeno as supreme Emperor, and sent him the regalia from Ravenna, but proclaimed himself King in Italy. Zeno had therefore a legitimate *casus belli*, according to Roman ideas; and he now, by this clever move, theoretically brought the West again under his direct rule, and freed Balkania from the Germans. Theodore defeated and murdered Odovacar, and ruled Italy and Western Illyricum for thirty-three years. Actually he was independent; in theory he was the Roman patrician governing the prefecture of Italy in the name of the Empire. Zeno's last years were passed in peace. He was never popular; he was regarded, like the rest of his countrymen, as no better than a barbarian,* and the favour which he showed them exasperated the pampered Constanti-

* His true Isaurian name was Tarasicordissa; that of his father, Rusumbleotus.

nopolitans. His financial policy was not successful; but we must remember that he had the Goths on his hands, though no doubt his lavishness to the Isaurians increased his difficulties. He was not a favourite with the orthodox Church party owing to his efforts to conciliate the Nestorians and monophysites. The real work of his reign, in which he was entirely successful, was the formation of a native army. He died in 491; his children had all predeceased him, and the supreme power devolved on his widow, Ariadne.

On April 11 the Empress chose as her colleague Flavius Anastasius of Dyrrhachium, one of the 'Silentiaries'—a guard of nobles which formed the Emperor's personal escort—and six months later formally espoused him. Personal liking may have had something to do with what appears to have been an unexpected choice; Anastasius, a man of handsome presence even in age, with brilliant unlike eyes, may have attracted the notice of the Empress; but he was otherwise well fitted to wear the crown. Ariadne's choice offended the Isaurian entourage of the late Emperor, headed by his brother Longinus and the Magister Militum per Illyricum of the same name. They raised a revolt in the capital, which was only suppressed after severe fighting. The brother of Zeno was taken and tonsured, but the Magister Militum escaped to Isauria and called his wild countrymen to arms. They advanced 100,000 strong on the capital, but were defeated at Cotyæum in Phrygia. In 493 the Isaurian fortress of Claudiopolis was stormed; in 494 the rebels were badly beaten close by; but it was not until 496 that the

revolt was finally suppressed, though it had long ceased to be formidable.

In 493 the Slavs made an inroad into Thrace, and in 499, and again in 502, the Bulgarians also invaded the Empire. To protect the suburban districts of the capital, Anastasius in 512 drew a wall across the Thracian peninsula about thirty miles from Constantinople. Disturbances on the Syrian frontier in 498 were successfully put down, and the commercial entrepôt of Jotaba, in the Red Sea, which had been lost in the reign of Leo I., was recovered.

In 502, after a peace of eighty years, war once more broke out with Persia. That great Oriental empire had been for many years involved in troubles with a Central Asiatic horde known as the Haithal or Ephthalite Huns. They were at present more or less quiescent, and the activity of Anastasius on his eastern frontier alarmed King Kobad. In 502 the Persians captured Martyropolis and Theodosiopolis, and next year Amida also. The Roman troops had become unused to regular warfare, owing to their guerrilla experiences in Isauria, and seemed unable at first to cope with the Persians. A victory which they gained at Nisibis was offset by two Persian successes; but in 504 the main Persian force under its King was beaten at Edessa, and the Roman army recovered Amida and ravaged the Persian border districts. Meanwhile the Huns invaded Persia, and thereupon Kobad made peace, restoring his trifling conquests. Three years later Anastasius built a strong fortressed city on the site of Dara, a Mesopotamian village. It was only a few miles from the Persian frontier stronghold of Nisibis, which it was calculated to

watch, and constituted a continual eyesore to the Persians.

Anastasius, though at the outset of his reign he had been popular, soon lost favour with the population of the capital. His care for the finances caused him to be accused of miserliness, while his religious sympathies were monophysite, thus exposing him to the often openly expressed dislike of the city factions. His religious heterodoxy probably had something to do with the rebellion of Count Vitalian, a grandson of Aspar, which broke out in 514. Vitalian inflicted a great defeat on the imperial forces at Odessus in Thrace, and the Emperor, now in extreme old age, tried to conciliate him by creating him Magister Militum per Thracias. In 515 Vitalian was outside the capital, but his fleet was beaten off Chrysopolis, and he retreated to the Danube. A raid of Huns in the same year into Asia Minor did some damage, but had no permanent results.

Anastasius died in 518, at the age of eighty-eight, after a reign of over twenty-seven years. His financial policy had been highly beneficial. He reformed the curial system, and the taxes were henceforth farmed by imperial officials, thus guarding against the defrauding of the treasury by curiales and provincial governors in collusion, while the interests of the taxpayers were protected by the formation of a new body of officials called *defensores*. Given that the latter did their work honestly, the system was not a bad one; it was certainly less harsh and unjust than the curial order of things. Anastasius sternly checked the peculation rife among the civil officials, and so has been misrepresented by

THEODORA IMPERATRIX.

By Val Prinsep, R.A.

The artist's aim appears to have been to depict, not the heroine of the "Nika" sedition, but the ex-ballet-girl rehearsing for Court ceremony as in the old days for the performance at the theatre. Her friend Antonina appears to be giving her a hint on the subject of deportment.

at least one of them, who wrote in later years, and, like most officials, whatever their department or degree, wrote rather as an official than a patriot. But his greatest reform was the abolition of the Chrysargyron, which was hailed with universal joy. The Emperor expended large sums in public works; but despite all these expenses, and the cost of the wars which troubled his reign, he left a treasury reserve of 320,000 pounds of gold (about £14,000,000), an army in which the native element decidedly outbalanced the foreign mercenaries, and the Empire in better order, on the whole, than it had been for a century and more.

Anastasius left no children, but had two nephews, Hypatius and Pompeius. They were men of little merit; Hypatius was discredited in the public eye by his bad conduct at Odessus, where he had been defeated by Vitalian. Amantius, a eunuch of the Court, perhaps designed to place one of them on the throne, and approached Justinus, a brave but illiterate veteran who commanded the Imperial Guard. He placed in his hands a large sum with which to bribe the officers under his command. Justinus used the money to secure his own elevation, and when he came forward he was accepted willingly by Senate and army. He reigned for nine peaceful years, and followed on the whole in the steps of Anastasius, except in religious matters. In spite of his want of instruction, he was certainly no nonentity; his nephew Justinian was his colleague during the greater part of his reign, but it was not until after the old Emperor's death that he broached his schemes of conquest. Vitalian was conciliated and made Consul, but died

soon after, assassinated, so the gossips of Constantinople insisted, by Justinian. The latter was Consul in 521 and entertained the population of the capital with magnificent shows and games; thenceforth he was practically his uncle's colleague.

Justinian, the son of Justin's deceased brother Sabatius, was a staid personage of over thirty, much given to deep study, one of those men whom the present age dubs 'old-fashioned'; nobody, people said, could ever recollect him being young. His natural abilities were not, probably, above the ordinary, but his powers of application were considerable, and he was a tireless worker. His attainments in law were unquestionably very great, and he had considerable aptitude for theology. He had the ability to form great and far-reaching designs, and the perseverance necessary to carry them out. He had no military knowledge—in consequence his vast plans were often very badly executed; and he seems to have lacked the discrimination of character which is absolutely necessary for the complete mental equipment of a despotic monarch. He was soon to amaze people by committing the very last action which would have been expected of him. In 526 it was bruited abroad in Constantinople that the grave, serious, old-young Cæsar, the student and thinker, whose knowledge was so tremendous that, according to the ignorant dwellers in the poorer quarters, he was often seen walking about without his head, was in love with the beautiful dancer Theodora, whose reputation was 'really too dreadful for words.'

The theatrical profession at this day has not the best of reputations with certain classes, but it is

savoury compared with that which it bore in the Roman Empire in the year 526. It is possible to-day for an actress to escape the imputation of having at some time or another slipped in the mire of immorality. But under the pagan Roman Empire actresses were either slaves or prostitutes, or both; and whether they were invariably the latter under Christian rule or not, they were usually so regarded. The delight of scandal-mongers, when the news of Justinian's love-affair spread abroad, may be imagined.

A love-affair it certainly was. What other reason for such an occurrence can there be? If the Cæsar needed a beautiful partner, he could take his choice of hundreds of lovely candidates, with advantages of birth and breeding which Theodora cannot have had. She was probably poor; her profession was regarded as disgraceful. Justinian knew that he must meet condemnation on every hand—that he could not even legally marry her. He was certainly not too old to know deep and passionate love; it may very well be—to the writer it appears so—that his passion for Theodora was the single powerful human emotion that ever affected his peculiar, coldly intellectual, temperament.

Theodora was the daughter of Acacius, an attendant of the Hippodrome at Constantinople, and her first public appearance is said to have been after the death of her father, when she and her two sisters wandered round the arena begging the charity of the spectators. Thereafter she had become a public dancer, and—as dancers did, and do—doubtless often performed in scanty attire; quite possibly

she did not escape the contagion of immorality. Procopius probably lies in his bitter 'Secret History,' but there must have been some foundation for his tales, though slander often rests on a very slender basis of fact. In 526 she was a young widow, with one or two little children, short of stature, slight, and delicate of appearance, pale-faced, but superlatively lovely, with wonderful expressive eyes.

Justinian announced to his uncle and mother his intention of wedding Theodora. They bitterly opposed him; the old Emperor threatened to disown him; but the stubborn Cæsar, to whom love had come so late, remained steadfast, and at last prevailed. Theodora's personality would seem to have completed the victory, for she was ennobled by having the title of Patrician conferred upon her—a strange step for the old Emperor to take unless he had convinced himself that she was not the foul creature that she was represented to be. It would have been so easy to have solved the difficulty by quietly executing a woman who was little more than a slave, that it is difficult to believe that Justinian's mother at least was not convinced of her comparative innocence.

At all events, the deed was done. Justinian took to wife the dancing-girl of the circus, and ere long had every reason to be thankful. In April, 527, he was proclaimed Augustus, thereby formally becoming his uncle's colleague; and in August the aged Justinus passed away.

CHAPTER IV

JUSTINIAN I.: A.D. 527-565

Justinian I.—His aims—First Persian War—The Nika sedition—Conquest of Vandals—First conquest of Italy—Justinian's legislative works—His buildings—Heavy taxation—The second Persian War—Ostrogothic rally under Baduila—The Great Plague—Loss of Italy—Death of Theodora—Estimate of her character—Lazic War—Final conquest of Italy and destruction of Ostrogoths—Defeat of Franks—Ruin of Italy—Conquest of Southern Spain—Decay in Justinian's later years—Hunnish invasion—Death of Justinian.

ON the death of his uncle, Justinian, without opposition, though there was still a considerable party in favour of the nephews of Anastasius, quietly succeeded to the undivided exercise of the authority which he had shared with Justin for several years. The great object of his policy, in the pursuit of which he never wavered all through his long reign, was to reduce the West once more under the direct authority of the Empire. Theoretically, of course, no province, with the exception of Britain, had fallen away. Actually, the West was independent; and if in Italy the rule of the great Theodoric had probably been highly beneficial, the other regions were more or less rapidly becoming barbarized. The government of

such rulers as Gaiseric was probably unmitigatedly bad; where its results, as under Theodoric, were good, they still depended entirely upon the personality of the king for the time being; the provincials had no guarantee for the continuance of peace and good government.

To Justinian such a condition of things must have been intolerable; and quite apart from his natural desire, as Roman Emperor, to reunite the disintegrating heritage of Theodosius, the restoration of the lost regions to the blessings of Roman government and civilization must have always appeared to him in the light of a sacred duty. Nor is it possible to urge against this view, which was probably that of the educated classes as a whole, the argument that the provinces would probably be wrecked in the reconquest; the obvious reply is that some short-lived suffering is better than irretrievable ruin and relapse into barbarism. As a matter of fact, Africa was recovered within a year at the slightest possible cost of life and property; and had a great military ruler directed the attack on Italy, it would probably have been won back in a couple of years, and the way cleared for the reconquest of Gaul and Spain. To an emperor of warlike ability, wielding the great resources of the East, the recovery of the West was not a task of insurmountable difficulty. That it was only partially accomplished must be attributed largely to Justinian's limitations of character and ability, partly also to certain external circumstances over which he had no control. Since his foreign policy was the keystone of his designs, it was unfortunate in the last degree that he possessed no military

talent; further, he had a not unreasonable dread of the possible results of entrusting large powers to capable and ambitious generals. Justinian was also continually hampered by the hostility of Persia in the East, and by barbarian raids on the Balkan Peninsula.

At the very outset of his reign Justinian had a foretaste of the trouble which Persia was to cause him. The new frontier fortress of Dara, or Anastasiopolis, where the Roman commander in the East now had his headquarters, was a standing eyesore to the Persians, and Justinian had perhaps already, as Justin's colleague, made evident his policy of conciliating the petty kingdoms on his eastern frontier, and so forming a line of buffer states against the Sassanids. In 527 he appointed a favourite young officer, Belisarius the Thracian—who had married his wife's friend, Antonina—Governor of Dara, and directed him to construct a fort close to Nisibis. This action appeared to threaten the Persian frontier fortress, and King Kobad declared war.

Early in 528 a force of 30,000 Persians under Xerxes, a prince of the royal house, defeated the Roman troops which covered the new frontier post, and captured and destroyed it. Xerxes followed up his blow by directing a raid into Syria which effected much damage, and which the Romans, who were distracted by a revolt of the Samaritans in Palestine, only feebly opposed, though they replied to it later in the year by making a counter-raid into Adiabene. The revolt was suppressed, and late in the year Belisarius—quite possibly by petticoat influence, for he was only twenty-five, and had hardly distin-

guished himself so far—was appointed Magister Militum per Orientem. A veteran soldier, Hermogenes, however, was appointed chief of staff.

In 530 the Persians invaded Roman Mesopotamia 40,000 strong, including at least a part of the famed 'Immortals.' Belisarius and Hermogenes, with little more than 20,000 men, gave them battle under the walls of Dara, and gained a complete victory; while a little later a second Persian force which had entered Armenia was routed by the general Dorotheus. The Persian plan of campaign had thus completely miscarried, but there was great disagreement between the young Magister Militum and his subordinates, and the success was not followed up. Next year, taking advantage of these dissensions, the Persians turned the Roman position in Mesopotamia by crossing the Euphrates at Callinicum, and Belisarius came up with part of his forces in time only to receive a severe defeat. It was evident that, whatever his ability might be, the young general could not control his officers, and he was superseded by the Gepid leader Mundus, who retrieved the disgrace of Callinicum by completely defeating the Persians at Martyropolis in Mesopotamia.

Both sides were now weary of the war. The Persians could make no headway, and Justinian, anxious to have his hands free for the prosecution of his designs in the West, was not averse to making one or two slight concessions for the sake of peace on the Euphrates. A treaty was concluded in 532, by which Persia undertook to keep the Caucasian defiles closed against barbarian irruptions into either

Sébah & Joaillier.

PLATE VI

SANCTA SOPHIA, CONSTANTINOPLE.

Built by Justinian I., consecrated 538, converted into a Mohammedan mosque 1453. It is now thought that the design of its famous architect, Anthemius of Tralles, was never completed. The minarets and most of the erections in the foreground are Turkish.

empire ; while Justinian agreed to contribute 11,000 pounds of gold to provide for the maintenance of the necessary garrisons, and to withdraw the headquarters of the Eastern army from Dara to Constantina, some distance in the rear, thus relieving the Persians from the real or fancied menace of a Roman force constantly on the border-line. He doubtless considered peace in the East cheaply bought for a sum which was probably less than the cost of another campaign, but the money payment could be, and no doubt was, regarded by the Persians as blackmail.

The first Persian War ended, Justinian hoped to be able to turn his attention to the West, but before he could do so he had to face a grave domestic peril in a revolt of the circus-named demes of the capital. These were neither more nor less than political factions, which used the colours of the charioteers of the Hippodrome as their badges and appellations. The outbreak has often been regarded as a last expiring flash of popular independence. The writer begs leave to question this ; there will be reason hereafter to show that the populace of Constantinople was always ready to express its opinion in vigorous fashion at a crisis. Be that as it may, it threatened the existence of the Dardanian imperial line.

Justinian, being himself orthodox, was inclined to favour the Blue faction, against the Greens, who were monophysite, and in favour of the nephews of Anastasius ; but for a constitutional monarch—and the Roman Emperors were very decidedly such, despite their imposing semi-religious titles and pretensions—to be in sympathy with a political party

is not to say that he must wink at their infractions of the law. Moreover, though the Emperor was Blue, Theodora in her dancing days had worn the colours of the Greens, and was naturally inclined to sympathize with them.

On Sunday, January 11, 532, the Greens formally complained by their demarch to the Emperor of the injustice which they had had to endure at the hands of some of the officials. The complaint was made, as usual, in the Hippodrome, the crowd assembled to witness the races always furnishing a good opportunity for the people to state their grievances. The Blues violently interrupted their rivals, and a tumult arose, which was not quieted until blood had been shed. Seven ringleaders were arrested and condemned to death, and Justinian refused to exercise his prerogative of mercy in favour of those of them who belonged to the Blue faction. The result was disastrous: the Blues turned against an Emperor who, unjustly, as they considered, would not protect them against the consequences of their misdeeds, and began to make overtures towards reconciliation with the Greens. Next day a vast sullen crowd collected to witness the execution of the ringleaders; the hangman lost his head and bungled his work, and two half-hanged men were rescued and placed in sanctuary. This open defiance of the law was followed by a formal union of the factions. They took as their war-cry the word 'Nika' (Victory).

Next day Justinian was confronted in the Hippodrome by the entire mob of rioters, which furiously demanded the dismissal of the City Prefect,

Eudemius, the man immediately responsible for the late executions; of Tribonian, a famous lawyer, now quaestor; and of John of Cappadocia, the finance minister. One touch of taxes makes the whole world kin, and evidently the exactions under Justinian were already more severe than in the days of Anastasius. Moreover, John and Tribonian had evil reputations for honesty in financial matters.

Justinian had with him in the palace, of reliable troops, only one regiment of mailed horsemen, and a force of Herul and Gepid fœderati, probably not more than 2,000 men in all. The five Scholæ of the Guard were about 4,000 strong, but under Justinian they had tended more and more to become a merely ornamental body; there were, no doubt, plenty of gallant gentlemen in their ranks, but mere undisciplined gallantry is not worth a great deal in street-fighting; and many members of the Scholæ were not even fighting men.

Justinian evidently thought that the situation demanded conciliatory handling. On the 14th he dismissed the unpopular officials, and replaced them by men acceptable to the people; but the rioting continued. The Emperor had at his disposal both Belisarius and Mundus, and the former moved out against the rebels with the Teutonic troops. The next four days were marked by desperate street-fighting, in which the rebels held their own stoutly. Fires broke out everywhere, as the fierce mercenaries and infuriated rioters contended for the mastery, and on the 17th the whole eastern portion of the city was a mass of ruins; only the huge fabric of the Hippodrome still stood amid the

mournful desolation, and formed the stronghold of the insurgents against the imperialists in the palace enclosure.

Troops meanwhile had reached the palace by sea. The factions now had decided to crown as Augustus one of the nephews of Anastasius. They were, however, with Justinian in the palace. The part played by Hypatius is difficult of comprehension; the writer's opinion is that he was probably willing enough to be crowned, but lacked the energy and determination requisite for an imperial claimant. Justinian seems to have thought that he was less dangerous at large than in the palace, where his presence would rather stimulate the eagerness of the rebels to come at him. A fresh sortie made by the troops on this day was repelled, and then the Emperor ordered Hypatius and Pompeius to leave the palace.

Next day Justinian opened a parley. Coming on to the platform of the Kathisma (the Imperial Grand Stand), he addressed the rebels, swearing on the Gospels that he would grant all their lawful demands, and pardon all guilty of complicity in the revolt. No monarch could well do more, but he was greeted with jeers, missiles, and yells of execration, and his guards had to protect him back to the palace. Hypatius had been discovered and recognized; and, though his wife strove to dissuade him from acceding to the insurgents' requests, he gave way. On the following morning he was crowned with her necklace wreathed diadem-wise, in the Forum of Constantine. Whether he still attempted to remain faithful seems dubious; one account says

that his course was finally determined by a false report that the Emperor was in flight. Then he had no further doubts, and, concentrating his followers in the Hippodrome, received their homage before leading them against the palace.

There, there was something like a panic. The finest part of the city was in ruins; the rebels were triumphant; the troops had lost heavily in the fighting, and their leaders were not confident. A council of war was held, and to it came the Emperor and Empress, Belisarius and Mundus, and the chief ministers. Justinian laid before it the alternatives of continuing the apparently hopeless defence of the palace, or of withdrawing to Heraclea Pontica to rally the Eastern army. The consequences of this latter step might easily have been fatal. Justinian had tried all means to subdue the revolt, and all had so far failed; he was a beaten man; had he left Constantinople, he would have confessed his defeat to the world. Adherents would have flocked to his rival; it is probable that he would never have seen his capital again. Nevertheless, John of Cappadocia directly advised the step, and was supported by most of the ministers. Belisarius and Mundus appear to have concurred—perhaps because they thought that without the clogging responsibility of guarding the Emperor they might do better. The impression given is that the sense of the council was practically unanimous.

Then great-hearted Theodora rose in her wrath, and fiercely denounced the project which was approved by all the wisest and bravest heads of the Empire. At this terrible hour, when the fate of the

realm literally balanced on a razor's edge, the fiery courage of a woman turned the scale. Half Constantinople was in ruins, and the smoke of its burning was drifting over the Bosphorus; tens of thousands of triumphant rebels were acclaiming a rival Emperor hard at hand; the palace was full of beaten soldiery; and as she stood by the throne, storming her excited periods, her slim figure instinct with pride and contempt, her eyes glittering darkly in her little pale face, the ex-dancer looked down on defeated and disheartened men, wavering in the fatal irresolution that so often ends in crazy, helpless panic.

'No time this,' cried Theodora, 'to pay regard to antiquated maxims; and so, though a woman, I will speak. Our dearest interests are at stake, and we must think of the wisest plan of action, and of nothing else. Of course our councillors advise flight. It is only natural; but if the natural course of action, even though it lead to safety, bring disgrace upon us, then it is but an evil one to follow. All men must die, but how much more terrible than death is it for a king to survive his kingship! Escape is very easy, my Emperor; you have but to go on board ship and sail away; nor need you want, for you have gold in plenty. But I tell you that when you have deserted your post as Emperor, you will taste the very bitterness of death; and I, your wife, will not fly. I will not live to see the day when my purple robes are torn from me, and I am Queen and mistress no more. Let us remain at our post and fight to the last. If we die, we meet our fate as becomes us, for empire is a glorious winding-sheet!' Theodora's fiery words and fiery gestures swept

opposition before them. Her despondent husband and his timid councillors caught courage from her speech. The failing hearts of the soldiers kindled again at the glance of the brave dancing-girl, who perchance did indeed hide in her bosom the recollection of past days that she fain would have forgotten, but who now, innocent or guilty, showed herself well worthy of the crown that her husband and sovereign had given her, a veritable queen of men. What further discussion there was is not known, but the results of the conference are certain. The eunuch Narses was sent out into the city, well provided with money, to endeavour to sow dissension among the not too solidly united factions, and every available man in the palace marched under Belisarius and Mundus to attack the rebels massed in the Hippodrome.

Belisarius made a direct attack upon the Kathisma, where Hypatius was now receiving the tumultuous homage of his supporters, while Mundus moved against the eastern side of the huge enclosure. Belisarius was repelled from the Kathisma, where the picked men of the factions made a desperate and successful resistance; so, leaving a portion of his force to mask it, he turned the remainder upon the western entrances, which he finally succeeded in carrying, just as the column of Mundus fought its way in by the Gate of the Dead, on the east. The insurgents fought desperately, but were at a hopeless disadvantage before the trained soldiers, cooped up in an enclosure of which all the main exits were occupied; and a frightful massacre was made of them by the furious troops, who had a week of ill success

to avenge. The loss of life has been rated as high as 50,000; it must in any case have been enormous. Hypatius and Pompeius were taken and executed. The extent of their guilt is difficult to estimate, but Hypatius had allowed himself to be crowned as a rival to the Emperor; it does not appear that Justinian could, in the circumstances, have acted otherwise.

The Persian trouble got rid of—only temporarily, as it proved—and internal disaffection quelled by the terrible lesson of the 'Nika' revolt, Justinian was at last able to turn his attention to the West. There the circumstances were extremely favourable. Theodoric the Great had died in 526, and his successor, Athalaric, followed in 533. Athalaric's mother, Amalasuntha, the Romanizing daughter of Theodoric, succeeded him, but was murdered by the worthless husband, Theodahat, whom she had taken in deference to the prejudice that no woman could rule alone over Goths—a prejudice probably well justified in the present case. In Africa, Hilderic, King of the Vandals, had been dethroned by his cousin Geilamir, perhaps the most thoroughly incapable monarch who had sat so far on any of the kingly thrones of the Teutonic West. Justinian declared war upon him as soon as peace had been made with Persia, and, with diplomatic astuteness, alleged as his reason that Geilamir had wrongfully deposed Hilderic, the friend and ally of Rome. The premature disclosure of the great design of recovery of all the West would probably have united Franks, Goths, and Vandals, in a solid phalanx of resistance.

In July, 533, Belisarius, now in high favour for

E. Alinari.

CHURCH OF SAN VITALE, RAVENNA.

Built by Justinian I., about 547, to commemorate his recovery of Ravenna. It contains the famous mosaics of himself and Theodora.

his services in the 'Nika' sedition, sailed from Constantinople for Africa with 10,000 infantry and 5,000 cavalry, on 500 transports, escorted by 92 men-of-war. The armament put in at Tripolis, the easternmost Vandal town, which was at once betrayed by its inhabitants, and whence the army advanced cautiously along the coast on Carthage. Geilamir was utterly unprepared; his best general, his brother Tzazo, was in Sardinia. He sent to recall him, and gathered his levies; but so great was the confusion and unreadiness of these erstwhile terrors of the Empire, that not until Belisarius' slow advance had reached the tenth milestone from Carthage were the Vandals able to offer battle. They made a poor resistance, were routed and scattered, and the Roman army marched into Carthage next day. Geilamir would probably have submitted there and then, but Tzazo had now reached Africa from Sardinia. He rallied the disheartened levies of his brother, and advanced with him to retake Carthage. Belisarius moved out from the city to deal with the Vandal rally, and the opposing forces blundered into each other at Tricameron, on the road from the capital to Bulla. The Vandals were once more routed, and Tzazo slain. Geilamir fled into the mountains, but the rough fare of the Moors with whom he took refuge soon became intolerable to his weak, luxurious nature, and he surrendered, asking only for a harp to which to sing the dirge for the Vandals, a sponge with which to dry his tears, and a loaf of bread—a delicacy which he had not tasted among the Moors! If the fallen monarch really did send this miserable message, he could hardly have done any-

thing better calculated to make him an object of utter contempt.

The conquest of the African coast to the Pillars of Hercules was rapidly and easily accomplished; and Belisarius returned to Constantinople with his royal prisoner, a long train of noble captives, and the vast treasures of the Vandal King, the fruits of many years of unrestrained piracy on land and sea.

In 535 Justinian declared war on Theodahat of Ostrogothia, using as a pretext this time the King's murder of his wife. Theodahat was a sufficiently poor creature, and the collapse of the Vandals cowed him. He made no preparation for war, but spent much time in consulting astrologers and sorcerers; he was ready to resign his great heritage without a blow, but there was plenty of good material in his nation, and the noble Ostrogothic race was not to fall without a desperate struggle.

Two invasions of the Ostrogothic kingdom were planned. Belisarius, sole Consul for the year 535, was to invade Italy with a force of only 7,500 men. This seems so utterly insignificant that it must be supposed that it was exclusive of the general's huge *comitatus* of 7,000 troops; even so, it was sufficiently weak for the task before it. Mundus, now Governor of Illyricum, was to reconquer Dalmatia and Pannonia. Belisarius landed in Sicily, and by the end of the year had conquered the island; only Panormus seems to have made any resistance. Mundus meanwhile had taken Salona and conquered Dalmatia, but in the midst of his successes he was attacked by a large Gothic army, defeated, and slain. This victory, however, did not benefit

the Goths; they were forced to retreat before the successor of Mundus, and ultimately Dalmatia was firmly held by the imperialists.

Such success as the Goths had gained was not owing to the exertions of Theodahat, who appears to have been really crazy with fright. When, early in 536, Belisarius crossed the Straits of Messina and took Rhegium, the Gothic host could bear no more. They promptly slew the miserable creature who sat on the throne of Theodoric the Great, and elected an elderly chief named Witigis, a respectable warrior of the drill-sergeant type, and a man of integrity, but not the leader for a great occasion. Belisarius for the time did not advance; the newly-conquered province of Africa was in a ferment; part of the troops had mutinied, and had been joined by a remnant of the Vandals. Belisarius hastened to Carthage, and defeated the rebels on the Bagradas. Then, having apparently reduced the revolt to manageable proportions, he returned to Italy.

Meanwhile the Franks, possibly stirred up by Justinian's diplomacy, were threatening the Ostrogoths from the north, and King Witigis was drawn away to oppose them. Belisarius, marching northward from Rhegium, was very feebly opposed; there were only 4,000 Goths under Leudaris even in Rome itself. Naples was taken by surprise, after a blockade of three weeks, and then Belisarius advanced on Rome. His army was reduced to a shadow by the numerous garrisons which he had been forced to leave behind, but the very stars in their courses seemed to fight for him. His advance was unopposed; Leudaris lost his head and gave the

order for retreat, and Belisarius marched triumphantly into Rome from the south-east just as the Goths were leaving it on the north, on December 10, 536.

Witigis, having bought off the Franks by ceding Provence, could now turn against the Romans. In the spring of 537 he arrived before Rome with the whole host of the Ostrogoths, over 100,000 strong, and beleaguered the city for twelve months. Belisarius had only some 5,000 troops wherewith to defend the vast circuit of the walls of Aurelian and Honorius; and that with such feeble resources he was able to repel assault after assault, and to hold out until famine and pestilence broke up the siege, speaks volumes for the helplessness of the Goths and the incapacity of their leader. The blockade was never complete or effective, and reinforcements and convoys of supplies were able to find their way in. The final column of reinforcement, which arrived in February, 538, was 5,000 strong. Success on the part of the Goths was now not to be hoped for; in March they abandoned the siege and retreated northward. Belisarius caught their rearguard at the Pons Milvius and totally defeated it. Later in the year a fresh force of 7,000 men, under John, the son of Count Vitalian, took Ariminum.

The imperial troops now concentrated in Rome. Besides Belisarius there were John and Narses, the eunuch whom we have already met in the 'Nika' sedition, and none had any definite primacy. Finally, however, Narses was recalled, and Belisarius, left in chief command, captured Fæsulæ and Auximium, and cautiously felt his way towards Ravenna. The Franks had broken the peace made in 536, and again

invaded Italy. The Goths were defeated, the plain of the Po wasted; Witigis seemed helpless. In May, 540, Belisarius occupied Ravenna, having starved the city into submission. There fell into his hands King Witigis, many nobles, and a great hoard of treasure. The admiring Goths offered the regality to the victorious general; but whatever his private ambition may have been, Belisarius had no thought of disloyalty. He returned to Constantinople with his captives and spoil; and so, twice within seven years, Justinian saw a conquered king at the foot of his throne.

Italy seemed conquered; only a small Gothic force still remained in the valley of the Po; and yet almost all that had been conquered was to be lost again, and twelve years were to elapse before the final victory was won. The Gothic remnant was led in quick succession by two chiefs, Hildebald and Eraric; then, in 541, the leadership passed to Baduila, a man to be named with all honour and reverence, possessed of all the qualities that make for true nobility. Baduila quickly showed that the Gothic spirit was not extinct. When, in 542, the imperialists began to collect for the conquest of the Po valley, he boldly advanced against them, and defeated them at Faenza. Following up his success, he routed John, son of Vitalian, at Mugillo, and shut up the remains of his army in Ravenna. He then pushed forward the work of reconquest, and met with little opposition.

The year 540 marks the highest point of Justinian's reign. While his foreign policy was everywhere meeting with brilliant success, he was busy with

great works at home. In 528 a commission, including the great jurist Tribonian, began to codify the laws. It had the Theodosian code upon which to work, and in little more than a twelvemonth had completed its labours. This was only a beginning. On December 15, 530, a second commission, presided over by Tribonian, set to work on a digest of the entire body of the laws of Rome. It was a gigantic task, but in three years it was completed. Then, to facilitate study, the commission compiled a manual of the law in four volumes—the 'Institutes'; it was really a new edition of the earlier 'Commentaries' of Gaius, with the alterations and notes necessitated by the changed times. At the same time the course of study for intending lawyers was carefully examined and revised.

Justinian was a builder on a gigantic scale. He had a fair field for his operations in Constantinople after the 'Nika' sedition, but the capital was but one of the cities which he embellished or strengthened. In Anthemius of Tralles he had at his disposal one of the greatest of architects. Churches, basilicas, monasteries, fortresses, hospitals, arose everywhere. The greatest of his monuments was the splendid church of The Divine Wisdom in Constantinople, which has been more than once characterized as the most perfect specimen of a Christian temple that the world has ever seen. On its many glories we need not dwell. It is now a mosque of the Turks, but all their Vandalism, all the effects of their wasting hand, have been unable to hide or destroy its majestic splendour.

Sancta Sophia was but one of many churches built

or restored by Justinian, though by far the greatest; even in newly conquered Ravenna the imperial architects and builders were soon busy, and produced for the Emperor San Vitale and S. Apollinare in Classe; the former containing the only attempts at likenesses—if such they can be called—of himself and his wife that we possess. His civil and military works were enormous; he built basilicas by the score, and fortresses and military towers literally by the hundred—294 in the Balkan provinces alone.

But all these works, combined with the cost of administration and of continual warfare, required an enormous outlay. Justinian apparently never seriously trenched upon his huge treasury reserve, but paid for everything out of revenue. He was probably guiltless himself of any desire to oppress his people, but his agents carried on a continual process of grinding extortion, John of Cappadocia especially earning a terrible reputation. As early as 532 we find the 'Nika' rioters complaining of severe taxation. It is not likely to have been diminished after the suppression of the revolt. There was war in Italy; in Africa, the Moors, the remnant of the Vandals, and disaffected troops, gave trouble until 545; there were also hostilities in Illyricum, when in 540 Khusru 'Anushirvan,' son of Kobad, King of Persia, very likely owing in some measure to Gothic intrigues, invaded Syria.

Khusru did not care to waste his host on the walls of Dara and Edessa; he crossed the Euphrates at once into Syria, and marched straight on Antioch. The apparent strength of the great city so impressed him that he offered to withdraw for 1,000 pounds of

gold; but when his terms were rejected, he made a virtue of necessity, and, probably rather to his surprise, stormed Antioch. Part of the garrison cut its way out, but the city was sacked and thousands of the inhabitants carried off to Persia. Khusru made no attempt to hold Antioch, but at once turned homeward. He went by way of Mesopotamia, and on his march attempted to crown his campaign by storming the Persian eyesore of Dara, but was handsomely repulsed by the garrison.

In 541 Belisarius was appointed to the Eastern command. Khusru advanced into Armenia, and attacked the thin slip of Roman territory along the south-eastern shore of the Euxine. He stormed the fortress of Petra, south of Phasis, but before he could do more he was recalled by the news that Belisarius had fallen on Mesopotamia. The campaign ended without result. The war dragged on for some three years longer, but its history is devoid of interest. In 542 and 543 the Great King gained one or two trifling successes, chiefly, as it would seem, because Belisarius was ill-supported. He captured Callinicum in 543; in 544 a Roman corps was defeated in Persarmenia; but in 545 the Persian Grand Army sustained a very bloody and humiliating repulse before Edessa. Thereupon the Great King made overtures, and once more Justinian, to free his hands for operations in Italy, where matters were very serious, preferred to buy a truce at the rate of 2,000 pounds of gold. The peace, after all, was only partial; in Lazica (the Colchian inland) hostilities were expressly permitted to continue. Khusru had shown by his expedition in 542 that he had designs

on this region ; they appear to have aimed at pushing the Persian border through to an outlet on the Euxine.

While the Persian War lasted, hostilities in Italy were little regarded ; the troops there were left unreinforced and unsupplied. The pressure of taxation was cruel ; in 542, a blow which could not be parried fell upon the Empire in the form of a terrible outbreak of the plague. It was an epoch-making disaster ; there can be no doubt that it so weakened the State as to make it practically powerless before any great shock from without. The population was probably nearly stationary at the best of times ; the burden of taxation, the prevalence of monasticism, continual barbarian ravages in the Balkan provinces, not to mention other causes, must have tended to retard any increase ; and the wasting hand of the pestilence made havoc that could only have been repaired under the most favourable circumstances. The mortality in Constantinople at the height of the scourge is said to have exceeded 5,000 a day ; if so, the population of the capital can hardly have been diminished by less than 100,000 souls. The details —the all-searching and all-destroying infection, the helplessness of the pseudo-science of the day before it, the craven terror and panic, the general apathy and despair—are those of all similar visitations. Procopius naïvely says that its one marked characteristic was that it carefully spared the wicked.

The plague almost paralyzed Justinian's efforts for some time : the war in the East languished ; Italy was left almost to itself, and Baduila gained ground fast. The Emperor himself had had an attack of

the disease, and it seems to have left him weakened both in body and mind.

By 543 Baduila was master of most of Northern Italy, excepting Ravenna and one or two isolated strongholds; he then crossed the Tiber, and avoiding Rome, where a strong force was stationed under Bessas, an able but harsh and avaricious officer, overran the southern provinces almost without resistance; plague and lack of reinforcements rendered the imperialists helpless. He besieged and took Neapolis and, pushing on to the south, captured most of the Roman troops remaining in the fortress of Hydruntum. Then, in 544, he turned back to besiege Rome, though he had only 15,000 men available for the great task.

Late in the year Belisarius reached Italy, having again been appointed to the command. He retook Hydruntum and relieved Auximium, and in 545 proceeded, evidently by sea, to Ostia to do the same for Rome. Justinian had begun to distrust him; he was stinted in every way; his great veteran *Comitatus* was withheld from him; his army was small and raw. Bessas had alienated the Romans by his harshness, and before Belisarius could obtain reinforcements with which to attempt the relief—for which he had sent home John, son of Vitalian—Rome fell by treachery.

John meanwhile had come back with fresh troops and an independent command; he reconquered Apulia and Lucania without difficulty. Baduila thereupon abandoned Rome, breaching its walls and deporting such of the population as remained, and marched to meet him; but as soon as he was gone

Belisarius reoccupied the city, and when the King turned back to retake it he was repulsed. Beyond this Belisarius could do nothing; for some two years he lay entrenched in the ruins of the great city, holding his own, but unable to advance; elsewhere the imperialists were confined to the walls of Ravenna, Auximium, Hydruntum, and Croton, and could not meet Baduila in the field.

The deadlock lasted for two years. Belisarius appealed in vain for supplies and reinforcements; he could only hold Rome, and Baduila fitted out a fleet at Ancona which ravaged the coast of Dalmatia, and, sailing boldly to the west, wasted Sardinia. Then Belisarius heard of an event which he evidently regarded as fatal to all his hopes and prospects. He applied for permission to resign; it was granted; and he left Italy for the last time in 549. To the event which ruined his hopes we now turn.

On July 27, 548, Theodora died. Her influence as Empress appears to have been wholly for good; the stories of the 'Secret History' of Procopius are so contradictory that they cannot be believed. She doggedly opposed the evil finance minister, John of Cappadocia, and finally ousted and ruined him. She probably saw the bad effects of his measures better than her husband, obviously because she had personal experience of the hardships of poverty. Whenever she made her influence felt, it seems to have been exerted on the side of justice and wisdom. She was generous, pitiful to the oppressed; and if she were vain, her vanity is hardly to be put against her care for fallen woman; charity to the sinful of their own sex is certainly not a female virtue. To the last

Justinian's affection for her never seems to have wavered; in Sancta Sophia we still may see the monogram of the imperial pair in the gallery, where they sat at public worship; his love episode is the one sympathetic trait in the character of the Emperor, and with his brave wife the best of him lay dead.

In this same unhappy year the Slavs ravaged Illyricum up to the walls of Dyrrhachium, and in 550 they made a fresh raid and sacked Topirus in Thrace; the imperial troops seemed helpless to stay them. In 551 they were again raiding in Illyricum and Thrace, and defeated a small Roman force in the open field near Adrianople. Next year the raid was repeated. Justinian's attention was fixed on Lazica; he made hardly any attempt to succour Illyricum or Italy, where Baduila recaptured Rome after the recall of Belisarius, and thenceforth held the entire country, except a few fortresses.

For some time after Theodora's death the Emperor seems to have remained in a state of apathy, like that which paralyzed the energies of a somewhat similar monarch, Philip II. of Spain, in 1596. However, in 549, he roused himself, and decided to end the partisan warfare in Lazica. A strong force was despatched thither, which failed to take Petra, but routed a Persian division near by. Next year the Persians were again defeated; Bessas, the general whom we have already met at Rome, put down a rising of the Abasgi in Colchis, and in 551 stormed Petra and routed the Persians at Archæopolis. These successes were not continued in 552; though all went well for a time, the Roman army retreated in a panic when menaced with attack by a new

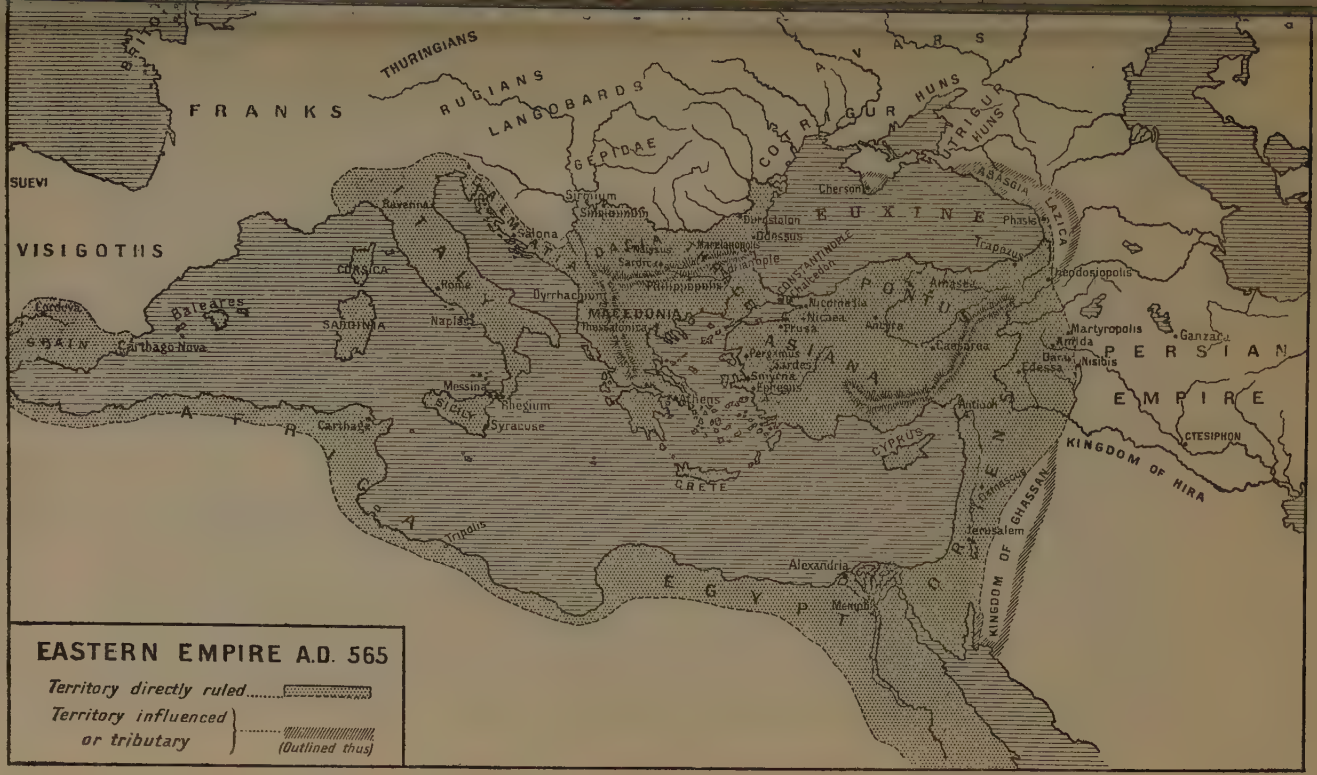
Persian general, and was forced to the coast at Phasis. The Persians, 60,000 strong, followed it there in 553 and besieged it in its lines, but, making an assault, were totally defeated. There was further desultory fighting, but the Romans were now firmly established in Colchis, and in 556 peace was concluded for fifty years, Khusru receiving in lieu of Lazica 400 pounds of gold a year. Once again the bad practice of money payments was adopted, but the fruits of the war lay with Justinian; the Persian hopes of pushing their border to the Euxine had been baulked.

In 552 Justinian had resolved on a final attempt to subdue Italy. A fleet and army were collected in Dalmatia under the command of Narses; Justinian would employ Belisarius no more. In justice, it must be said that, though the great general's second command in Italy was a failure, he came home wealthier than ever. We can hardly blame Justinian for distrusting him. Narses marched by land with his army, and entered Italy from the north. The fleet defeated that of the Ostrogoths off Sena Gallica, and Narses reached Ravenna without opposition. He then (A.D. 553) advanced on Rome. At Tagina, in the Apennines, he met the great King of the Goths, and a desperate battle was fought. The Roman victory was complete; 6,000 Gothic knights perished; and, worst of all, Baduila was slain. The end was nigh. Yet that sad end of a noble race had a tragic splendour. Narses occupied Rome, and moved on into Campania, where the broken army had rallied for a last stand under Teia, the best and bravest of Baduila's captains. Beneath Vesuvius

Narses came upon the last forlorn hope of Ostrogothia, and crushed it into all but total annihilation. Only 1,000 Ostrogoths stood to their arms after the battle; and Narses, with something, we may believe, of true admiration in his soul, gave them permission to leave Italy and go whither they would. So, with dead Teia on his shield at their head, as in life he had led them, the sad little column passed the Roman lines and went away never to return; and with those grand warriors passing into the night of oblivion, the Ostrogothic nation disappears from history. As they told Narses, God was against them, but they had produced the greatest man of the fifth century, Theodoric; and Baduila and Teia; and now that they were gone the world was poorer.

All was not yet over. In their last agony the Goths had sought aid from every side, and Theudebald of the Franks had permitted two chiefs, Buccelin and Chlothar, to enter Italy with 80,000 men. They came too late to help Teia, but proceeded to waste Italy for their own benefit. One division perished of starvation and disease in Apulia; the other, under Buccelin, attacked Narses at Casilinum, and was simply annihilated. Italy was Justinian's at last, but Italy so ruined as to be all but worthless. In many places the land was a vast solitude; everywhere it was wasted and depopulated into hopeless poverty and misery. Nevertheless it was Roman once more. Vandals and Ostrogoths had been swept away; the Franks had received a severe lesson; now it was to be the turn of the Visigoths—the sackers of Rome in 410.

In Spain, King Agila was in 554 engaged in civil



EASTERN EMPIRE A.D. 565

Territory directly ruled

Territory influenced or tributary (Outlined thus)

E. Alinari.

MOSAIC OF THEODORA, WIFE OF JUSTINIAN I., IN THE CHURCH OF SAN VITALE, RAVENNA.

The Empress is depicted as making an offering to the Church. The figure on the right may be her friend Antonina, the wife of Belisarius.

war with a rebel, Athanagild. The latter was foolish enough to invite the help of Liberius, Governor of Africa, who invaded the country and rapidly subdued most of the south and south-east. The Visigoths at last recognized their folly; they murdered Agila, and acknowledged Athanagild as king. He was able to check the further progress of Liberius, but failed to recover the lost territory, which was held in whole or in part for some sixty years.

Thus by 556 Justinian had reconquered Italy, Illyricum, Africa, the islands of the Western Mediterranean, and part of Spain, and had held Persia steadily in check. He had completed his legal reforms; the Empire was covered with his monuments. But all this had been done at the cost of exactions which had entirely exhausted the State. The civil service was large and far too powerful; there is every reason to believe that it, and not Justinian, was responsible for many of the oppressions which weighed so grievously upon the suffering people. After his wife's death Justinian distrusted everybody. His nephew Justinus, who was married to Theodora's niece Sophia, was kept in the background; and the Emperor, now more than seventy years of age, grew steadily weaker; his intellect was obviously failing; he seems to have lost in great measure even his love of hard work. He allowed the officials to gain power unchecked; the army fell into grave disorganization; barbarian raids were bought off. As his powers declined he wasted much time on religious controversy, trying to coerce orthodox believers and monophysites into unwilling and unenduring agreement. The whole machine of

government and defence was out of order when, in 558, a horde of Cotrigur Huns made a daring raid into Thrace. They do not appear to have numbered 20,000 cavalry in all, and a body only 7,000 strong came close up to Constantinople. Belisarius, who was hastily called from his retirement to defend the capital, could only collect the useless 'Scholarians' and a few hundred veteran horsemen; infantry were of course useless; but the Huns were beaten without difficulty in an action at Melantias, near Constantinople; another of their corps was severely handled at the same time near Cardia; and the whole horde withdrew. Justinian now intrigued with the Utrigur section of the Huns to attack the Cotrigurs, and the two tribes, busy with fratricidal warfare, had no leisure for further raids.

Belisarius some four years later was suspected of complicity in a conspiracy against the Emperor's life. His property was sequestrated, and he was kept under arrest for several months. Justinian's conduct certainly appears contemptible, but it is very difficult to say whether it was, as Professor Oman thinks, unpardonable. At all events he ended by restoring the general to favour and fortune. Belisarius died in March, 565; his wife Antonina lived some years longer, and died at the great age of eighty; the inhabitants of the Roman East were certainly not devoid of vigour.

Justinian died on November 13, 565. His character has, as far as possible, been dealt with previously. With all his failings, he fills a large space on the Roman canvas; and if his undertakings were not always successful, we must remember his

many difficulties. He has been compared with Louis XIV. of France, and with Philip II. of Spain; the writer believes himself able to discern points of resemblance to both. He was clearly a better man than either, far less dissolute and ostentatious than the Frenchman, not a hypocritical bigot like the Spaniard. His first love was his last, and no La Vallière bewailed her fate at his hands. He was able in several ways, hard-working, thoroughly well-intentioned, and conscientious. And so we leave him, the best known and yet most mysterious of the long line of Byzantine Cæsars.

CHAPTER V

JUSTINIAN'S SUCCESSORS—WEAKNESS AND DECAY

Justin II.—Critical condition of Empire—Unwise policy—Persian and Avaric Wars—Italy occupied by Lombards—Tiberius II.—His extravagance—Maurice—Peace with Persia—Successes over Avars—His unpopularity, deposition, and murder—Accession of Phokas.

JUSTINIAN'S marriage with Theodora had brought him no children. Though Justin, the son of his sister Vigilantia, held the office of Curopalates—Master of the Palace—the highest in the Empire after those of Augustus and Cæsar, he does not appear to have ever been formally designated as his uncle's successor; Justinian, indeed, seems to have distrusted and depressed him. But on his uncle's death he came forward without hesitation, and was acclaimed Augustus by the Court and Senate, and afterwards solemnly crowned in Sancta Sophia. He was married to Sophia, a niece of Theodora. She had inherited her aunt's fiery courage, and aspired to play her part, but had not her political aptitude.

Justin ascended the throne at a moment of extreme gravity. The Empire was internally greatly exhausted, and its weakness was accentuated by its

E. Alinari.

INTERIOR OF CHURCH OF S. APOLLINARE NUOVO, RAVENNA.

PLATE IX

wide extent, which necessitated the holding of worthless tracts like Italy and Western Illyricum against attack from without, at a time when it had powerful enemies near at home. The savage Avars, Tartar horde perhaps akin to the Huns, probably including some fragments of that famous race, had now reached the Danube, and before long the Empire was to know them only too well. An embassy from them came to Constantinople in Justin's first year, probably to ascertain what amount of blackmail he was prepared to pay. Meanwhile they thrust the Slavs before them across the Danube. On the east the Persians were ever ready to strike another blow. The Emperor was confronted and hampered at every turn by the great mass of self-interested bureaucracy, which had become powerful during the later years of Justinian; and his efforts to relieve the burdens of the people were silently frustrated. The phenomenon is not an unusual one in history. The military service was also in a weak and disorganized condition.

Justin began his reign by paying his uncle's debts. He repudiated Justinian's blackmailing policy towards the barbarians, and determined to repel savages by force, a resolve which, in the state of the Empire, was certainly ill-timed, bold and magnanimous as it may be thought. The Avars and Slavs resumed their depredations, and owing to the military policy which had been followed for many years, of keeping only garrisons and no field force in Europe, they were able to pursue them with little opposition. Justin followed at first a policy of toleration in religious matters. He proclaimed a general

remission of arrears of taxes up to the year 560; but at the same time the customs duties were increased, and a tax put upon the "political bread" distributed to the populace of the capital. The general tendency of Justin's policy during his earlier years shows that there was much exhaustion in the provinces, and that the government was intensely unpopular. The weakness of the Empire was accentuated by its tendency to break apart owing to the diversity of its component nations; this tendency Justinian's centralizing policy had really increased. Various provinces had up to his time been grouped under great Viceroys; these viceregal offices he abolished, thus weakening one of the ties which united separatist peoples. In 568 the Emperor, who, though irritable and mentally ill-balanced, lacked neither insight nor ability, passed an edict to the effect that provincial governors were to be chosen by the local magnates and people, and installed without cost to the latter. It was a wise and well-meant measure, but it is open to question whether it was not quietly evaded.

But it was in the department of foreign politics that Justin was most unfortunate. Italy, very feebly garrisoned, ravaged and nearly depopulated by plague and famine, was occupied in great part by the Longobards, with so little resistance, even considering the weakness of the Empire, that the writer is forced to the conclusion that their settlements were made with its tacit consent. Real resistance was made by only the single fortress of Pavia, which held out for three years; the incident shows how helpless the Teutons were against walled towns. The Empire held, in 700, only the extreme

outh, and a district roughly corresponding to the present provinces of Eastern Emilia, the Marches, Western Umbria, and Roma, with the Campanian coast and Venice, comprising about a fifth part of continental Italy. Sicily and Sardinia, however, were held for nearly three centuries yet, and the Empire was hardly weakened by its loss of provinces which cannot have paid the expense of maintenance.

In 572, war again broke out with Persia. Justin refused to subsidize the Sassanids any longer for Lazica and the Caucasus passes, and Khusru Anushirvan, now in old age, but as vigorous as ever, declared war. In 573 the Magister Militum per Orientem, Marcian, defeated a Persian army atArgathon, but failed to take Nisibis, and meanwhile the Persians made a fearful raid into Syria and dragged away a vast number of captives—292,000 we are told, an incredible figure. Apamea was taken and destroyed, and a number of the most beautiful girls were picked out to be sent to the Khan of the Turks, with whom Khusru was anxious to keep on good terms. They forestalled their name by drowning themselves; the incident deserves the record that all heroic actions merit. Next year the Persians captured their chronic eyesore of Dara, while in Europe the Avars ravaged Mœsia and defeated the general Tiberius, the future Emperor, who led a small force against them. Justin's mind was already failing, and Sophia thought it necessary to buy a truce for a year, for which she paid 45,000 solidi. In 575 this was extended for three years, except in Persarmenia, where the war went on without interruption; the

payment was reduced to 30,000 solidi per annum. Khusru in 576 advanced into Armenia and besieged the Roman frontier fortress of Theodosiopolis, but, failing to take it, entered Cappadocia. He destroyed Sebaste, but was defeated on his march to Melitene by Justin, son of Germanus, who had been sent to oppose him. He retreated towards his own border, burning everything in his path, including the city of Melitene, but was caught up by Justin near the latter place and totally routed. Next year, however, Justin was in his turn defeated by the general to whom the aged Khusru had given place, but this was offset by a very successful irruption made by the general Mauricius into Arzanene and Gordyene.

In 578 the Emperor, who had long been suffering from intermittent insanity, died, and the Cæsar Tiberius, whom we have already transiently met, and who had been practically Emperor since 574, succeeded him. He was a well-intentioned, but impulsive and ill-advised ruler. In 579 Khusru Anushirvan died, and the Romans pushed a raid eastward into Media Atropatene. In 582 the Avars, for the first time, gained a solid success over the Empire by the capture of Sirmium, but a Persian invasion of Mesopotamia was repulsed at Constantina. Meanwhile the savage Slavs were penetrating into the Balkan provinces, not to plunder, but to settle. Little could be done to check them at present. The Persian war demanded the presence of the whole available forces on the eastern frontier; but Tiberius had made a vigorous effort to reorganize the army, which had been in a bad and mutinous condition ever since the latter years of Justinian.

For this the civil officials were chiefly responsible, since their policy was, as is common with bureaucratic bodies, exaggeratedly anti-militarist; the troops, more or less neglected, and furnished with pay at very irregular intervals, grew discontented, and tended to become what the army of old Rome had been in the third century—a danger to the State rather than its protection.

Tiberius's domestic policy was most unfortunate, not to say absurd. He remitted a fourth of the direct taxation, a measure which, perhaps, admitted of defence; though the removal of the duty on the political bread could only have been devised as a means to curry favour with the idle populace of the capital. Absolutely indefensible are his grants to members of all professions—not merely scholars and physicians, but lawyers, goldsmiths, and bankers! Comment is needless. The donations to the army were, perhaps, a little more sensible, since it was necessary to conciliate the ill-used troops; but it was dangerous to pamper them, and Tiberius's successor had to reap the evil fruits of his policy. Meanwhile, of course, this lavishness emptied the treasury.

Tiberius died on August 5, 582, having designated as his successor his best general and trusted friend, the Cappadocian Mauricius, whom we have seen in action against Persia, and whom he had married to his youngest daughter Constantina.

The reign of Maurice opened with a disaster in the East. The Romans were beaten in Armenia owing to quarrels between their generals, while in Europe the Avars took Singidunum (Belgrade).

Maurice bought off the latter with a subsidy of 120,000 solidi; they had already received 80,000 in 581, and 100,000 in 582. Little could be done by force against them, for the whole field army of the Empire was in the East, and when they began to take fortresses they were becoming something more than a trouble. The next two years were marked by indecisive fighting on the Persian border, while in Europe the Slavs settled everywhere in the wasted provinces. In Greece they 'squatted' all over the interior, and the Hellenes were forced everywhere seaward, abandoning such homes of their race as Sparta and Megalopolis. One of these refuges on the coast, which afterwards grew into an important city, was the headland in Laconia, where had once been the tribute station from which the Minoan Sea Kings dominated Peloponnesus, and where the emigrants now founded famous Monemvasia. The same thing took place in Dalmatia. The Slavs in Thrace, however, were defeated by a small Roman division under Comentiolus.

In 586 Philippicus, Maurice's brother-in-law, defeated the Persians, and, though he unaccountably retreated after a successful raid into Arzanene, he closed the year with an invasion of Media. But the Avars ravaged Mœsia and starved Dorostolon and Marcianopolis into surrender; and Comentiolus, who had only 6,000 troops under his orders, could not effectively oppose them. Next year, however, a new general, John-the-Moustached, beat the Avars before Adrianople. Heraclius, father of the future Emperor of the same name, ravaged the Persian borders; and when in 588 the Persians besieged

Constantina, it was relieved, and the besiegers routed at Martyropolis.

In 589 Martyropolis was betrayed to the Persians. A Roman force marching to the relief was defeated; but Comentiolus, now appointed to the command, routed the Persians at Nisibis. Meanwhile the Arabs raided Persian Mesopotamia, the Turks threatened the north, and the pressure on the Roman frontier slackened. The Turks were defeated by the general Varahran, who then hastened to oppose the Romans, but was twice routed on the Araxes. King Hormuzd insulted him for his ill success, and he promptly revolted. In September 590 Hormuzd was slain. His son Khusru (afterwards called Aparvez, 'the Victorious') appealed for help to Maurice and made peace, thereby ending the weary war of raid and counter-raid. The Roman army marched to the aid of Khusru, Varahran was defeated and slain, and the rightful heir enthroned. By this kindly and, in the circumstances, well-timed act, Maurice gained a valuable accession of territory in Armenia, but Khusru was destined to be the most terrible enemy that the Empire had had since Hannibal.

Having ended the Persian war, Maurice brought across to Europe the bulk of the eastern army. He announced that he would himself take the command, and set out to do so; but the opposition of the officials was so strong that he gave way—a proof of the huge influence possessed by the civil service, and of the comparative helplessness of the nominal head of the State. In his place a general, Priscus, was appointed, who, after gaining some slight suc-

cesses, was superseded by the Emperor's own brother, Peter. Matters had reached such a pass that it was only by employing his relatives that the ruler could be sure of faithful service. There was no serious fighting, and for some years there was comparative quiet on the Danube; the Avars, with the erratic instinct of barbarian nomads, swerving off westward and attacking the Teutons in Germany.

During these years Maurice remained at Constantinople, working hard at attempts to reform the administration, struggling against the dead weight of bureaucratic opposition which had baffled Justin and Tiberius II. He was crippled all his reign by the effects of the latter's unwise profuseness, and gained an undeserved reputation for miserliness, which he increased by certain ill-advised economies in the direction of docking the food and pay of the troops. He was unpopular in the capital, and his Christian virtues failed to win affection for him; when he refused to permit a heretic to be burned, he was stigmatized as unorthodox. His economy made him disliked both by army and civil service; he could command no support from the people.

In 597 the Avars passed once more over the Danube and defeated Peter, while the Slavs utilized the opportunity to besiege Thessalonica, so far south were they now established. In 598 Priscus again took over the chief command. He relieved Singidunum, and when the Avars invaded Dalmatia they were defeated by an officer named Godwin, obviously a Teuton, perhaps even an Englishman. Next year the Avars again crossed the Danube, and besieged Tomi, where Priscus had entrenched himself; the

Sébah & Joaillier.

THE COLUMN OF THE SERPENTS, CONSTANTINOPLE.

This is the famous Brazen Column consecrated by the victorious Hellenes to Apollo at Delphi after the defeat of the Persians in 479 B.C. It is therefore a memento of the first great victory of Europe over Asia. Its forlorn condition is the result of wanton destruction by Turks—some of it dealt by the hand of a Sultan!

siege was raised by Comentiolus early in 600, but his army retreated in a panic, and much mischief might have been caused. But the Avars were decimated by disease; the Khakhan's* own son died of the plague, and he sued for peace, which was concluded on the basis that the Danube should be the boundary between Roman and Avar. A subsidy of only 20,000 solidi was paid; the pride of the barbarians had evidently sunk; but Maurice ruined himself by refusing to ransom the 12,000 captives and deserters in the hands of the Khakhan, who thereupon gave way to savage fury and massacred them. It was at least one cause of the Emperor's fall. The Avars retired across the Danube.

Maurice immediately and shamelessly violated the peace. Priscus was across the Danube before the Avars could gather to oppose him. Near Vimiacum he caught their rearguard and defeated it, and pressed up the Danube, routing their scattered hordes one after another. He reached the Theiss before the Khakhan could call in his subject tribes, and completely defeated him. Priscus next attacked and massacred a remnant of the Gepidæ who still remained in their ancient seats; and then, following up the Khakhan, routed him in a final victory on the Theiss. There were no important operations in 601; the Avars were hard hit; the Romans turned their attention to the Slavs; many dispirited Avars deserted to them; and in 602 the

* Khakhan = 'Lord of Lords.' A better-known form of the word is Genghiz-Khan, the title assumed by the famous twelfth-century Mongol conqueror Temud Shin.

Teutonic general, Godwin, again crossed the Danube and gained a victory over the Slavs.

Success now seemed at hand; Maurice directed the army to winter north of the great river, so as to be ready for decisive operations in the spring. At once the troops broke out into mutiny. They had some slight reason, perhaps, but they were guilty of the worst kind of military disobedience in refusing to perform their plain duty at a time when one more effort might have cured the Avaric plague for ever, and dearly was the Empire to rue the consequences of this outbreak of ill-conditioned military licence.

The army selected a centurion named Phocas as general, presumably for the admirable combination in his character of turbulence and cruelty, since we do not find him to be possessed of any other positive attributes, and advanced on Constantinople. No opposition was made to it; the citizens opened their gates, and Maurice fled across the Bosphorus. He was taken at Chalcedon, and put to death with his five sons (the youngest a toddling child of three!). With them died the Emperor's brother, Peter, the distinguished general Comentiolus, and Constantine Lardys, Maurice's chief minister and friend. Priscus saved himself by joining the army, with which he was naturally popular; he may have had a hand in the movement. The Empress Constantina and her three young daughters were spared, but straitly imprisoned, and the obscure, witless centurion mounted the throne.

CHAPTER VI

THE ONSET AND REPULSE OF IRAN—THE COMING OF ISLAM

Phocas: His contemptible character, atrocities, deposition, and death—The Persian attack—Heraclius—Desperate situation of Empire—Loss of Egypt and Syria—Compact between Emperor and people — Avaric raids — Heraclius attacks Persia—Reconquest of East and final repulse of Avars—Domestic policy of Heraclius—The Saracens—Final loss of Egypt and Syria—Death of Heraclius—Estimate of his character and work.

OF all the Byzantine Emperors, Phocas was by far the worst. His one salient characteristic was barbarity; of capacity he never showed any sign. His energies were employed in securing his position; he cleared his path of the friends of Maurice by a series of bloody executions. Narses, the able general who commanded on the Persian frontier, was terrorized into revolt, but repented, and came under safe conduct to Constantinople to clear himself. Phocas broke his word and burnt him alive. He married his daughter Domentzia to Priscus, and advanced all available relatives to high positions. Plots were formed against him, but all were delated. One of these centred in the Empress Constantina. It was

betrayed; the unhappy lady was barbarously tortured, and finally put to death with her young daughters, a daughter-in-law, and nearly all the surviving adherents of Maurice who could be seized.

Khusru II. of Persia saw that his time had come. He had his *casus belli* in the murder of Maurice, and perhaps a desire to avenge his benefactor really had a place among his mixed motives, though when Rome was harassed in the west, Persia could hardly remain quiet. In any case the Persian King's personal motives were soon lost to view in the vista opened to him by his unexpected success. The wars of Rome with Parthia and Persia have, for the most part, a curious air of unreality. There is much fighting, much plundering and carrying away of captives, immense private misery, but no decisive success on either side. But now the whole character of the struggle appears to change. In 603 the Persians poured into Mesopotamia, and defeated the Eastern army under Germanus and Leontius; next year they again crossed the border, and defeated Leontius at Arzamon. The year 605 was comparatively quiet; but in 606 Syria was ravaged right down to the sea, and Dara was taken. In 607 the Persians invaded Asia Minor, and in 608 an army under Shahen made its way across Cappadocia, Galatia, and Bithynia to the gates of Chalcedon. It was the first time for centuries that Western Asia Minor had been troubled by a foreign foe. In 609 matters appeared desperate; the forces in Europe had been transferred to Asia to act against the Persians, and the Illyrian provinces were overrun more and more by Avars and Slavs; the Empire

held only the coast districts; Asia Minor was being ravaged; the army was beaten and demoralized. Phocas still sat on his red throne in Constantinople, where he maintained a veritable reign of terror; there seemed no hope unless he could be replaced by an able man.

In these wild years the one peaceful portion of the Empire was Africa, well governed by its capable and popular Exarch, the aged general Heraclius. Phocas seems to have feared to depose him; on his side Heraclius was joined every day by desperate refugees, but dared not revolt because his wife, Epiphania, and Eudocia, the betrothed of his son, were in the capital. In 608, however, Priscus, thoroughly sick of his miserable father-in-law, and perhaps ashamed of the share which he had taken in his elevation, began to correspond with the Exarch. After a time Phocas got wind of these negotiations, and imprisoned Epiphania and Eudocia. Their lives were obviously hardly worth an hour's purchase, and Heraclius prepared for war.

In the summer of 610 all was ready. The Exarch's son, Heraclius, sailed directly for the capital with a powerful fleet, while his nephew, Nicetas, marched eastward to secure Egypt. On entering the Dardanelles Heraclius was joined by many adherents, and the garrison of Constantinople deserted as the fleet sailed up to the walls. The ships in the harbour, manned by Phocas's few determined followers, made resistance, but were soon overpowered; and Phocas, seized in the palace, was brought bound on board the flagship. 'Wretch!' exclaimed the conqueror, 'you have foully mis-

governed the State!' 'See if you will do any better!' yelled the doomed tyrant, as the seamen dragged him away to death. His chief partisans and his brother Domentziolus were executed, and Heraclius entered Constantinople in triumph. The captive ladies were released. On October 5 the conqueror was crowned and married in Sancta Sophia, and then was face to face with the gigantic difficulties of his situation.

Matters could scarcely be worse. The army was a ruin. Theophanes gravely assures us that every man of the force of 602 had perished except two! Heraclius appointed Priscus commander in the East, and he appears to have raised and formed a kind of private army, with which he guarded the Tauric frontier for some years, while Theodore, the Emperor's brother, held Cilicia. More than this Heraclius scarcely hoped to do at first, and even this he was presently obliged to abandon. The European provinces were left almost unprotected outside the walls of the great cities; the Slavs colonized the deserted inland; the Avars careered far and wide. In Syria and Egypt there were hardly any troops, and the population as a whole was attached to Monophysite and Nestorian doctrines, alienated by the disasters and exactions of the Government, and generally sullen and disaffected. Africa, ruled by the Emperor's father, was the one faithful and unattacked province, and even from Africa little help was to be expected, since any withdrawal of troops was certain to be followed by territorial losses. The Spanish garrisons were left to themselves, and began to fall one by one into the hands

of the Visigoths. So, too, was Italy. At home Heraclius was confronted with the powerful and insubordinate bureaucracy and the increasingly insolent aristocracy; he was constantly hampered by the supposedly necessary task of supplying and keeping in good-humour the Constantinopolitan populace.

Heraclius seems to have devoted his first years to restoring some order at the centre of the Empire. So weak was his authority that, on finding a great noble guilty of malpractices, he had literally to trepan and assassinate the culprit, being quite unable to deal open justice. Demoralization was rampant. In 612 the young Empress Eudocia died, after presenting her husband with two children, Epiphania and Heraclius Constantine. She was buried with great solemnity, but the occasion of her funeral afforded the most awful example of the barbarism of the times that we yet have seen, worse even than the torture of Constantina and her daughters. A servant girl chanced to cough or spit as the dead Empress's bier passed by, and a little saliva fell on the edge of the pall. It will hardly be believed that she was seized and beheaded on the spot! The story is so horrible in its naked savagery that we can only hope that it is exaggerated.

The Emperor was probably justified in making a second marriage, but it cast a not undeserved stigma upon his character, which clung to it until the end of his life, for his second wife was his niece Martina. He was frantically in love with her, and until his death lost no opportunity of manifesting his affection. Possibly he thought that he was committing no

worse fault than if he had espoused a first cousin; but the act seriously injured him in the eyes of both clergy and people; and when Martina's first child was born wry-necked, and the second deaf and dumb, we cannot wonder that men spoke of the wrath of God. Abroad, disaster was the order of the day. Priscus soon began to show insubordination, and in 612 Heraclius enticed him to the capital and tonsured him, pacifying his mutinous troops by presence of mind and tactful words. For the moment, however, it seemed as if he had only removed another defence of the Empire, and the next six years were the most disastrous of his whole reign. In 614 the Persians poured into Syria, and overran the north with little resistance; the fortresses of Mesopotamia fell one after another, and with the capture of Damascus the Persian power was interposed between the disconnected halves of the Empire in Eurasia and Africa. Next year they marched into Palestine, under a leader called Shahr-baráz, 'The Royal Boar,' conquered the country, stormed Jerusalem, massacring or enslaving 90,000 of its Christian inhabitants, and carrying off the Patriarch and the 'True Cross' to Persia. All Jews were significantly spared; there were many of their co-religionists in the Persian ranks; they bought Christian slaves wholesale in order to wreak their vengeance upon them—a terrible testimony to the manner in which they had been treated. In 616 the Persians advanced into Egypt, and the disaffected population joined them with alacrity, so that the great grain-producing province passed into their hands, almost without opposition. Nicetas the cousin of Heraclius, its

governor, was forced to abandon even Alexandria and flee to Cyprus.

In 617 the Persians, under Shahen, penetrated to the Bosphorus, and captured Chalcedon. They remained there for six years. Heraclius seems really for a moment to have lost heart, or at any rate to have thought that any means, even the most disgraceful, would be justified to procure a truce. Shahen declared that his master only warred with the murderers of Maurice, and offered his safe-conduct to ambassadors to the Persian Court. Khusru, already beginning to show signs of the absolute madness of pride which ultimately ruined him, flayed the unfortunate commander alive for his presumption, and imprisoned the ambassadors. To Heraclius he sent a letter demanding immediate surrender, and bidding him not to trust his Christ, who could not save himself from crucifixion by the Jews; it was addressed, 'To Heraclius, his vile and insensate slave, from Khusru, the greatest of the gods, the lord of the world!' An example of pride before a fall, truly!

In the capital, matters were gloomy, for plague and famine reigned; the loss of Egypt had cut off supplies, and disease followed in the train of hunger. Heraclius could no longer feed the populace, and he declared that he must withdraw the seat of Government to faithful Carthage.

There was universal consternation. The selfish, heedless State paupers were at last galvanized into acting like men. Hitherto Constantinople, despite the patriotism shown on one or two occasions, had been little more than another Rome—a source of

weakness rather than strength—draining the revenue and contributing nothing to the defensive service of the Empire. Now, at last, it was brought home to the people that they were not the faithful subjects of the Emperor, but only his pampered children, and that there were others more deserving. There was a great ferment, resulting in a solemn covenant between Heraclius and his people. The Emperor promised not to leave the capital; he would regard its inhabitants as his children; he would defend the Empire to the last, and would take the field in person. The Patriarch Sergius offered the entire treasures of the Church for the expenses of the mortal struggle; the people enlisted by thousands. The capital was at last forced from its isolation, and stood out as the true leader of the Empire, a position which it never afterwards lost. For a few months corn was still distributed by Government, but at a fixed price; then the practice was quietly dropped. Emperor and people were united in a solemn resolve to do their best for the faith; the crusade—the First Crusade—had begun.

First of all, however, the rear of the Empire had to be relieved. Heraclius resolved to come to terms with the Avars, and a meeting was arranged between the Emperor and the Khakhan at Perinthus. Heraclius went without any misgivings, but the whole affair was a piece of disgraceful treachery. The Avaric host fell upon the Emperor and his escort, and Heraclius, tearing off his crown and flinging away his robes, only escaped by the speed of his horse. The Avar horsemen swarmed outside the walls of Constanti-

nople, and are said to have swept away 270,000 prisoners.

To turn on the Avars was to neglect the East. With bitterness and shame Heraclius bowed himself to ransom the captives. The Khakhan, perhaps, may have felt some shame at his treachery; the Emperor made an attempt to conciliate him by offering him the post of guardian to his son. For the present the Avars retired, but next year they once more made raids on Thrace, and it was not until 621 that they were temporarily got rid of by a subsidy of 200,000 solidi.

In 620 reinforcements came westward from Persia to the army at Chalcedon, under Shahr-baráz; on their march they captured Ancyra. On their arrival an attempt was made to pass the Bosphorus; presumably the Persians had constructed transport vessels at Chalcedon during their years of occupation. But the Roman fleet was strong. They were severely defeated, losing at least 4,000 men, besides the ships which they had laboriously constructed; and the army of the crusade was encouraged by its first success. During 621 the final arrangements were made for the great campaign. The capital was placed in charge of the patrician Bonus, a loyal and able general, and the Patriarch Sergius; they had in their care the Emperor's eldest son, Constantine, a boy of nine; the great fleet covered the city against the threats of the Persians at Chalcedon.

In the spring of 622 Heraclius moved. He embarked his available troops, and sailing up the Gulf of Nicomedia, landed them, thus turning the Persian position at Chalcedon. Shahr-baráz at once

abandoned his station, and came back to attack the Romans. Heraclius then advanced eastward into Asia Minor, and Shahr-baráz perforce marched after him. Heraclius, having drawn him away nearly to the Armenian frontier, turned to bay, and, after some clever manœuvring, severely defeated him. He left his army in cantonments, and returned, with prestige and popularity much enhanced, to Constantinople.

In 623 Heraclius set out to join the army, taking with him the wife whom he idolized. He concentrated on Cæsarea in Cappadocia, and moved north-eastward across Armenia into the valley of the Araxes, thus turning the Persians, who were prepared to oppose the passage of the Euphrates. In Armenia he took Dovin and Nakichevan, and pushed on rapidly, through Media to Ganzaca (Takht-i-Suleiman), where Khusru himself was in residence. Khusru was seized with panic and fled, and Heraclius stormed and sacked the city. He next captured and destroyed Thebarmes, the supposed birthplace of the great teacher Zoroaster, and thence advanced south-west towards Dastagerd, the favourite residence of Khusru. Now, however, for the present his success ended ; an army under Shahen (it looks as if this frequently-recurring name means nothing but 'royal leader') was in his front; Shahr-baráz had come up from the west, and was threatening his right flank. He therefore retreated northwards into winter-quarters in Albania.

In the spring of 624 he was attacked by three armies, under the generals Shahr-baráz, Shahen, and Shahrablakhan, respectively. By able man-

œuvring he contrived to save himself from a combined attack, and cut in upon their line of advance. Having obtained the interior position, he threw himself on Shahr-baráz and Shahrablakhan, badly defeated them, and then, swinging round upon Shahen, who was following behind, routed him also.

The three defeated commanders now effected a junction, and their united force, strengthened by reinforcements, was so strong that Heraclius did not venture to attack it. He retreated towards the Caucasus, followed by the Persians; but they dared not involve their hosts of cavalry among the mountains, and soon withdrew. Heraclius, having reorganized and recruited his army, once more advanced, and broke into the Persians' line of defence before they could concentrate their forces. Shahr-baráz was in position before Van; Heraclius attacked and defeated him, and stormed the city. The Persians retreated southward, and the Romans went into winter-quarters in Armenia.

In 625 Khusru altered his plan of campaign. He determined to play against Heraclius his own strategic game. Shahr-baráz was placed in chief command, and ordered to invade Asia Minor; he therefore marched westward into Commagene, but as soon as he moved, the Roman Emperor began to advance from Armenia. Following in the track of the Persians, he entered Roman Mesopotamia, and recaptured Amida, Dara, and Martyropolis. Shahr-baráz was prepared to defend the passage of the Euphrates at Samosata; but Heraclius, by one of his masterly flanking movements, manœuvred him out of his position and crossed lower down. Pressing

forward into Cilicia, he recovered the entire province, and ended his successful campaign by defeating Shahr-baráz on the Sarus.

The year 626 was the decisive one of the war. Khusru evolved a grandiose but incoherent plan of operations, by which the Roman Emperor was to be held at bay in Armenia, and a great invasion of Asia Minor carried out. He had been in communication with the Khakhan of the Avars, and the treacherous barbarian was only too willing to advance again on Constantinople. The best troops were selected from the various armies of Persia, and collected, 50,000 strong, under Shahen, who was to hold Heraclius in check. The other forces were assembled into one army, and placed under Shahr-baráz for the invasion of the Empire. He marched early in the year, and was well on his way before Heraclius was aware of the movement. But Khusru and the Khakhan forgot that the Empire held the command of the sea. Heraclius sent a picked detachment to the Euxine coast, whence it was conveyed to Constantinople. He then placed a strong corps under his brother Theodore to observe Shahen, and himself remained in Lazica, ready to support Theodore or return to the aid of Constantinople as necessary.

Theodore by himself was too strong for Shahen's 50,000 'Golden Spearmen.' He entirely defeated them, and the hapless general committed suicide. Khusru took a petty vengeance by flogging the lifeless corpse; clearly he was verging on insanity. Meanwhile Heraclius had not been idle. He entered into communication with the Turkí nation of the

Khazars, which was now becoming domiciled in the Volga basin; and the chief Khan, Zhebu, prepared to come to his assistance with 40,000 riders.

Meanwhile Sahhr-baráz had proceeded through Asia Minor and reached Chalcedon without opposition in the field, while the Avars made their way to Constantinople, 80,000 strong, dragging with them all kinds of engines for a siege. On June 29 they blockaded the capital on the land side, while the Persians crowded the heights of Chrysopolis; but, guarded by the Roman navy, the Bosphorus was as effective a barrier to their junction as the British Channel was to the power of Napoleon. Moreover, the city was impregnable to the Avars. The suburb of Blachernæ had been included in the circuit of the fortifications, and the barbarians looked in dismay at the vast moat and line after line of rampart, garrisoned by 12,000 cavalry, exclusive of infantry. On July 31 a fierce assault was made all along the landward line of wall, but beaten off with great slaughter. It was evident that without the assistance of the trained Persian troops the Avars were helpless, and on August 3 a great attempt was made to effect a junction of the allies by means of boats and rafts. It was entirely defeated by the Roman fleet, which rammed and sank the clumsy craft right and left, with the loss of thousands of the men who manned them. The Avars forthwith abandoned the siege and retreated northward; and though the Persians still held Chalcedon, they were powerless to harm the capital. The first great siege of Constantinople had failed.

In Armenia, Heraclius had been joined by his new

ally, Zhebu Khan, to whom he promised the hand of his daughter, Epiphania Eudocia. It was a political necessity, but the Khazars were not savages; thereafter more than one matrimonial alliance was contracted between the Roman and Khazar royal houses. Epiphania's fate need not have been a pitiable one; at all events, she was spared it by the death of her prospective husband. Before he died, however, Zhebu had led his wild horsemen all over Media, and had dealt another blow at the tottering power of Khusru—Aparvez no more.

Heraclius remained in the north—not necessarily inactive—for nearly a year after receiving the news of the Avaric repulse before Constantinople. His Khazar allies had returned home with their plunder; but in 627 Zhebu's successor despatched a fresh force to his assistance. Meanwhile he called in his detachments, and concentrated his strength for the decisive blow. Khusru, on his side, rallied the broken army of Shahen, and gathered together every available fighting man for a last effort, under a new general, called by Byzantine historians Rhazates, whose name, therefore, was probably Reza. His station was at Ganzaca; Heraclius must have been somewhere to the northward, perhaps about the modern Julfa on the Araxes. Orders were sent by the Persian King to Shahr-baráz to abandon Chalcedon, and to retreat on Mesopotamia. The message was intercepted, and Shahr-baráz remained in the West.

On October 9, 627, Heraclius began to move, but for some weeks nothing of importance happened The writer's suggestion is that Reza was too strongly

posted to be vulnerable to a direct attack; thereupon, about the middle of November, Heraclius marched westward past his enemy's front—he could now confidently take risks—crossed the mountains into Adiabene, passed the Greater Zab on December 1, and pointed forward down the Tigris for Dastagerd and Ctesiphon. Reza, abandoning his position at Ganzaca, hastened to throw himself in the way; his terrible half-insane master had given him order to conquer or die. Near the site of Nineveh he came up with Heraclius. There can be no reasonable doubt that the Persians were far superior in number, but the majority must have been raw levies. Almost on the ground on which Alexander had trampled the pride of the Achæmenids in the dust, a tremendous struggle raged all through Saturday, December 12, between the heirs of the greatest of European conquerors and the hosts of the Sassanid Great Kings. Reza and his soldiers did their duty manfully and well, and for long no decisive advantage was gained by either side. Towards evening Heraclius rallied the strength of his cavalry for a final effort; and Reza, catching sight of him, on his white charger Dorkon, leading the oncoming squadrons, and remembering his master's grim words, dashed forward and engaged him in mortal combat. Heraclius rode him down and slew him, and his fall was the turning-point of the day. With a last tremendous charge the Roman horsemen spread disorder through the faltering ranks; and the great battle, which had lasted from dawn to nightfall without intermission, ended in the defeat and practical destruction of the Persian army. So fine was the

spirit of the Persians that one splendid division stood to its arms all night on the field within bow-shot of the victors, but at dawn it sullenly withdrew. Khusru had no cause to blush for the ill-treated warriors who defended his cause so well.

Heraclius, moving forward from Nineveh, celebrated Christmas at Yesdim, a palace of Khusru, and on New Year's Day entered Dastagerd, while his vanquished enemy, accompanied only by his beloved wife Shirin and a few attendants, escaped through a gap in the wall and fled to the south. The plunder was enormous, for the greater part of Khusru's treasures were there. Three hundred Roman standards were recovered. The Emperor permitted no bloodshed, but the splendid palaces were ruthlessly sacked and given to the flames. If this seem an act of pure barbarism, there is the fact that the provocation was great. From Dastagerd the Roman army advanced on Ctesiphon, but was met with the news that revolution had broken out. Khusru, raging at the failure of Shahr-baráz to appear, and refusing to believe that his order had never been received, sent to execute him. The message was seized by Roman troops, and communicated to Shahr-baráz, who at once concluded an armistice, and marched homeward to support the revolution.

The end of the story of Khusru 'Aparvez,' who for ten years had been greater than any King of Persia, was that his son Sheroe dethroned and imprisoned him; his death of course speedily followed. The new king at once opened negotiations for peace, and Heraclius retired across Zagros in deep snow,

and went into cantonments at Ganzaca. On April 3 envoys from Sheroe arrived with full powers, and the treaty was concluded. The ancient frontiers of the two empires were restored; the Persians were to surrender all prisoners, booty, and sacred relics captured by them, and pay a war indemnity. On April 8 Heraclius set out from Ganzaca on his homeward march, and the Persian War came to an end.

It seems necessary to say a word on the Persian strategy, if only in reply to the allegations of those who to the writer's knowledge, in conversation and in print, have maintained that if Khusru's plans had been properly executed Persia must have succeeded. Clearly the same may be said of many military plans.

Khusru never made any attempt to utilize the naval resources of Syria to destroy the Roman navy. Constantinople was immensely strong, but it might have fallen had the Persians been able to cross the Bosphorus. As it was, Heraclius was able to start for the East, and reconquer the whole Empire from the capital. The capital was nearly all that remained of the State, but it was impregnable, because the Empire held the sea. Heraclius turned Chalcedon by sea, and by that single movement recovered Asia Minor. He never lost the initiative. When in 623 he invaded Media, he threw the Persian armies entirely upon the defensive, and Khusru's attempt to assume the offensive in 625 was futile because he left no force to 'contain' the Emperor, who promptly marched after Shahr-baráz, drove him back, and reconquered Cilicia and Mesopotamia.

The great plan of 626 failed to take into account the Roman command of the sea. The Persian containing force in Armenia was too weak to withstand even half the Emperor's army, and Shahr-baráz at Chalcedon was absolutely 'in the air.' Constantinople could not be taken by the Avars, and if every fighting man in Persia had been at Chalcedon, the host would have been impotent so long as the Roman navy guarded the strait. Again I must emphasize the point that the command of the sea was the fundamental principle of Heraclius' strategy; and since Khusru failed to recognize this, he is damned as either wilfully blind or hopelessly incompetent.

On May 15 the imperial despatches announcing the conclusion of peace were read out from the pulpit of Sancta Sophia, and a few weeks later the Emperor and his victorious host reached the capital. The population poured out to meet them, acclaiming the conqueror as 'Scipio,' and wrought up to fanatic enthusiasm by the sight of the Holy Cross, which was carried in the triumphal procession and afterwards raised on the altar of Sancta Sophia. The comparison of the Emperor with Scipio was just. Heraclius had saved New Rome, as Scipio had Rome on the Tiber; yet already the weapon was in the forging that was to rob him of his recovered provinces, and almost to do the deed that Hannibal had failed to achieve.

In the last year of the war the Emperor had received a curious letter from an Arab named Mohammed, claiming to be the Prophet of God, and bidding him embrace the new religion which he had

Sébah & Jaillier.

THE WALLS OF CONSTANTINOPLE FROM THE SEVEN TOWERS.

From this view the strength of the defenders' position in the many sieges is evident. Away to the left lay the suburb of the Heldemun

PLATE XI

founded. Heraclius sent presents and some kind of reply, thinking, probably, of the possibility of winning a new ally; but next year, 629, the fanatics of the new faith raided the Palestinian frontier, and gained a very bloody and trifling success over a Roman detachment at Muta, near the Dead Sea. For the present nothing more was heard, certainly nothing to forebode the dire tempest that was approaching.

The public-spirited action of the Church had enabled the Emperor to make the effort by which the Empire had been saved, but it had unfortunate consequences. In the first place the Emperor considered it imperative to liquidate, at the earliest possible moment, the great loan, and to accomplish this the provinces were heavily taxed. Syria had under the Persians doubtless endured much military violence, but its direct fiscal burdens do not appear to have been heavy. Egypt had been practically independent. The new taxation therefore excited great disaffection, which was increased by religious feeling. Syria was mainly Nestorian and Jacobite; Egypt, solidly Monophysite. Heraclius had some hopes, apparently, of unifying the various sects; he had the advantage that his influence with the whole body of orthodox clergy was great. His doctrinal speculations were finally expressed in the 'Ecthesis' of 638. Men were forbidden to discuss the existence of one will or two wills in the Being of our Saviour; but it was none the less set forth that there was in Him one will. The effect of the Emperor's 'Monotheletic' ideas was to still further divide the already distracted Church.

Another result of the co-partnership of Church

and State was that the Jews were persecuted, and the unhappy race became more and more alienated, and was ready to give its cordial support to any invader.

In other quarters the outlook was more promising. Spain had been finally lost, and Italy was falling away; but the Avars' 'Empire' was breaking up, and there was no further danger to be apprehended from them. Probably the failure of the great expedition against Constantinople in 626 was the final blow to the tottering barbaric power; its various vassals, Bulgarians and others, broke into open revolt. The Avars continued to be a torment to the West, but were never again formidable.

The whole Balkan inland was now occupied by Slavonic tribes. Heraclius made every effort to draw them into direct dependence on the Empire. It is not true that he established them as vassal settlers of the State; but probably Theophanes' statements have some reference to his friendly relations with them, though the precise nature of these relations is obscure. Heraclius' main attention appears, after 628, to have been devoted to the East, where Persia was in a sense politically subordinate. In 639 he succeeded in elevating the phil-Roman general Shahr-baráz to the throne. He proved an Oriental despot of the worse kind, and was murdered; but after some trouble his son, Yezdegerd III., succeeded him, still by the exertions of Heraclius. On the whole the outlook was not unpromising: the Emperor's personal renown and influence were immense; it seemed that a return might be made to the ancient peace of Rome—when

an irresistible power suddenly appeared and extinguished all such fair hopes for ever.

In 622 Mohammed had established a new religious and political era by the famous flight from Mecca; in 632 he died, having conquered all Arabia, and made it not merely subservient, but in great measure fanatically devoted to the religion which he had founded. It is not proposed here to enter into any discussion of the character of the founder of the Mohammedan religion; all that concerns us is that the moral and intellectual power which he indubitably wielded made the disunited Arabs the most terrible enemy that the Romans had seen. How terrible and overwhelming the mere unaided impulse of Mohammedan fanaticism may be has been shown in recent days. It was mad charges like those of Tamai and Abu-Klea that the soldiers of Heraclius had now to face, and they had no advantage except in their superior drill; they were not conspicuously better armed.

Mohammed at his death was preparing to launch armies against Rome and Persia. In 633 the Mohammedans began to attack Persia, but it was not until 634 that the second horde, under Abu-Ubeida, appeared on the Syrian frontier and besieged Bostra, which was captured by treachery. Heraclius himself was at this time resident in northern Syria, and he sent orders to concentrate the troops in the south against the intruders. This was done, but on July 30 the army was beaten at Aijnadin, and the Saracenic horde moved north to blockade Damascus. Heraclius, feeling the importance of the crisis, concentrated a large army for its relief. The Khalif

sent large reinforcements to the army in Syria, part drawn from the troops in Persia, and led by the famous warrior Khaled—'the Sword of God.' The two forces met at Yermuk. The Roman army is stated at the most absurd figures, one being the impossible total of 140,000 fighting men—80,000 regulars and 60,000 light horse of the friendly Arab kingdom of Ghassan. Seeing that only a month had elapsed since Aijnadin, the collection of 80,000 regulars in Syria was an impossibility. There may have been from 40,000 to 60,000 regulars, and perhaps 20,000 Ghassanids at the most. The Saracens are said to have numbered 45,000, but may very well have been as strong as the Romans. Heraclius, sixty years old and in failing health, was not in the field; the commander-in-chief was a Persarmenian named Vardan; Khaled really commanded the Arabs. At first the day went against the Mohammedans, but after furious fighting the Roman army was at last driven back and broken. The loss was enormous, but the Saracens also had suffered heavily; it is said that one of their divisions broke and fled pell-mell, and was only shamed into a fresh stand by the jeers and reproaches of the women in the camp. The Romans had fought well; the army that with sword and spear only could face and for long beat back a Dervish charge must have been a splendid one.

The results of the defeat were terrible. Damascus was besieged, and, after a desperate resistance, fell early in 635. Heraclius, old and weary, ill and disheartened, filled with the foreboding that all was in vain, took the field, but could do nothing. He

dared not risk his demoralized army in the field, and the Arabs took and sacked Emesa and Heliopolis. He could only station his troops to cover the north, and himself hastened to Jerusalem, took the 'True Cross' from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where he had replaced it five years before after his triumph over Persia, and sailed for Constantinople. His life-work was undone. As his ship drew away into the Mediterranean, he stood on her deck surveying the retreating coast in bitter despair, and, stretching out his arms, cried in his anguish, 'Farewell, Syria! Farewell for ever!' (A.D. 636).

On the retreat of Heraclius, the army broke out into mutiny, and proclaimed the general Vardan Emperor. Some of the troops, however, remained faithful; Heraclius sent assistance, and the mutiny was put down. Meanwhile the Arabs had obtained large reinforcements; and one army operated in the north, while the other invaded Palestine. The mutiny distracted the operations of the Romans, who could make no stand; Aleppo, Antioch, and Chalcis, were taken, and with them all but a fragment of Syria was conquered. In 637 Jerusalem, after a siege of over twelve months, was forced to submit, the Khalif Omár coming from Mecca to receive the capitulation. When the Patriarch Sophronius saw the aged Arab, in his rough camel's hair cloak, kneeling at the altar of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, he is said to have groaned that the abomination of desolation had indeed come into the Holy Place. To the writer's mind Omár, with all his rudeness, was not a worse

representative of the Christian faith than thousands of bedizened bishops before and since, whose conception of morality and charity has been no whit above that of the Khalif.

The clouds gathered fast. Heraclius was already in 638 suffering from dropsy, which was looked upon as a punishment for his marriage of Martina, but there was no thought of yielding to the evil fortune that had befallen the Empire. An army was assembled at Amida, and Heraclius Constantine, the Emperor's eldest son by Eudocia, came to take command. Several Syrian towns were recovered, and Constantine laid siege to Emesa. Khaled, collecting every available man, hastened to the rescue, and a battle was fought which decided the fate of Syria for three centuries. The Arabs were completely victorious; the Roman army was broken and destroyed; its shattered remains fell back behind the chain of Taurus; and the end of Roman dominion in the 'Orient' had come. Edessa, Dara, and Martyropolis, were taken; all Syria, except the island city of Aradus, was lost. In 639 the Emir Amrù crossed the Isthmus of Suez into Egypt. The Patriarch Cyrus, as far back as 635, had offered to pay tribute; the population was friendly enough to the invaders; the only opposition to be expected was from the trifling garrison and the Greek residents. Amrú overcame these in two stubborn fights, in which he lost so heavily that he was forced to halt until he received a reinforcement of 12,000 warriors from Khalif Omár. Thus strengthened, he advanced upon Alexandria, the troops and Greeks opposing him at every step, turning to bay again

and again, and fighting doggedly. At last, in October, 640, Amrú drove them into Alexandria and laid siege to it; and in December, 641, after a siege of fourteen months, the great city fell.

Heraclius did not live to hear of its loss. For three years he had been slowly dying; his disease gained more and more upon him; all around him was ruin and disaster, and in his palace the wife for whom he had sacrificed the good opinion of men, and, as many believed, his eternal peace, was intriguing to secure the succession for her own son Heraclius. Old, worn-out, broken-hearted, oppressed by misfortune, Heraclius was Heraclius to the end. Unable to leave his bed, he was urging on preparations for a great expedition to succour Egypt, when kindly Death came to relieve him. On February 10, 641, he passed away at the age of sixty-five, after an agitated reign of thirty years. His misfortunes must not allow us to blind ourselves to his merits. He had reconquered the eastern provinces only to lose them again; but his administration had left its mark on the Empire, and to the good effects of his work of reorganization much of the credit due for the steady stand made against the oncoming Saracen must be attributed. Syria and Egypt had gone; Africa was doomed; but Asia Minor had been solidly welded together into the main strength of the Empire. Often wasted as it was to be, it was never a willing victim; its gallant provincials filled the ranks of the army, and held their own for more than four centuries; there was none of the spiritless lethargy of the late Roman days, and to Heraclius must the chief glory be given. Under him the

people showed the first sign of anything like true patriotism that the Empire had yet seen. He was a great organizer; a great general, both as strategist and tactician; his political measures were commonly characterized by wisdom in conception and skill in execution. In religious matters his errors were such as few monarchs would, in his place, have avoided; his internal administration laid the foundations of the great reconstruction under the Isaurians. Few monarchs have ever accomplished so much under such calamitous circumstances, and none has a better title to the respect and admiration of mankind than the Emperor Heraclius.

CHAPTER VII

THE WARRIOR HERACLIADS

Constantine III.—Heraclius II.—Constantine IV.—The Empire at bay behind Taurus—Constantine IV. in the West—Constantine V.—The first Arab siege of Constantinople—The Bulgarian settlement—The Sixth Ecumenical Council—Commanding position of the Empire.

THE period 641—717 is in many ways the most obscure in late Roman history. The records are scanty and unsatisfactory; there is reason to think that important events are misrepresented; the whole epoch is a twilight one.

The natural successor of Heraclius was his eldest son and colleague, Constantine III.; but the old Emperor could deny nothing to his wife, and had designated her son Heraclius as co-heir with Constantine. He was only sixteen, Constantine was already nearly thirty; it was evident that the name of Heraclius II. would be merely a cloak for the exercise of his mother's power. Martina showed her hand by accompanying the Emperors to the Hippodrome when they went in state to be acclaimed by the people according to custom; but the Constantinopolitan populace would have none of her: she was greeted by angry shouts, and finally

told in decided tones that the Roman Empire should never fall so low as to be governed by a woman! She withdrew in wrath. There does not appear to have been any demonstration against Heraclius II. (Heracleonas, as he is commonly called, to distinguish him from his father), but the general voice was certainly in favour of Constantine III.

Martina, determined to assert herself, began to intrigue against her stepson. Court and capital split into factions; there seemed every probability of a civil war. In the midst of plot and counterplot, Constantine died at Chalcedon, after a reign of little more than three months. He was not, perhaps, a man of any great strength of constitution—his mother had been a delicate woman; but public opinion declared that Martina had poisoned him. Certainly her reckless action gave colour to the report. She promptly proclaimed her son sole Emperor. The act was unwise; it was scarcely constitutional; it was intensely unpopular, and all Constantinople, Court, Senate, and army, loudly demanded the coronation of the dead man's eldest son, Flavius Heraclius Constantinus.

Riots at once broke out; the Senate voiced the popular demand. Martina, in terror, gave way, and the youthful Constantinus was crowned Emperor at the age of eleven. For a while discontent was outwardly silenced, but it still fermented in secret, and in September, 642, the Senate executed a *coup d'état*, deposed 'Heracleonas,' and exiled him and his mother to Cherson in Taurida, the 'friend and ally' of the Empire—the last surviving free

Greek city-state. They were treated with barbarous cruelty ; the tongue of the mother and the nose of the son were slit. We shall meet with instances of these hideous practices again. Martina was certainly generally believed to have poisoned Constantine III. It was a shocking end to the story of the woman who had been the darling of the great Heraclius. Martina was morally neither better nor worse than a hundred million women to-day who plot for their children's advancement; but her stake was the Roman Empire : she failed, and had to pay a terrible penalty.

The young Constantine IV. was now sole Emperor. For some curious reason, impossible to define with any certainty, he has come to be known to several chroniclers both in East and West as 'Constans'; but he will be called here by the name which he bears upon his coins, and by which he was known to his own people.

For some years the government was carried on by the Senate. There was little internal trouble ; the great African House had won the love and respect of the people. Constantine's youth gave the Senate much influence, which, so far as appears, was exercised with prudence and patriotism. They were never more needed : the Mohammedans were thundering at the gates of Taurus ; the people, if attached to the Heracliads, were more or less discontented and restive beneath the burdens which they had to bear, and had not yet realized that, though under the Khalifs the direct taxes might be lightened, their indirect burdens would be greatly increased. After a spell of personal experience,

men began to discover that under the supposedly tolerant Mohammedan rule they had absolutely no guarantee against oppression, and even persecution; that the administration of justice was irregular, arbitrary, and corrupt; and that they and theirs were at the mercy of an irresponsible religious despotism. As yet there was no great disposition to think that the rule of the Crescent was worse than that of the Cross; people heard the mild and sanctimonious proclamations of the Khalifs, and forgot that they and their followers were half-savage freebooters and religious maniacs. The reign of Constantine IV. was probably the true crisis of the struggle; the Empire, thrown on the defensive, was pressed continually, and had no time to rally. Once it gained a breathing space, it stood up gallantly to its terrible foes, and even in its present wasted and mangled condition could wage a not unequal conflict. But the respite was yet to come: the great Khalif Omár was still urging on the work of his Prophet, and the Empire continued to lose ground.

Internally, the earlier years of Constantine IV. were not marked by any events of much importance. There were one or two slight outbreaks, which were easily put down; but there was a good deal of disaffection, due to the religious questions which always occupied much of the East Romans' attention. Heraclius, as we have seen, had tried, and failed, to soothe the dissensions in the Church by his 'Ecthesis.' Now, in 648, Constantine and his advisers published a fresh edict on the subject—the 'Type'—by which all were enjoined to observe complete silence on the burning question of the Single

and Double Wills. It was as completely ineffective as the 'Ecthesis'; it failed to satisfy even the Monothelites, while the orthodox attacked the young Emperor as a Monothelite himself. The Western clergy exclaimed against the edict; Bishop Theodore of Rome excommunicated Paul, Patriarch of Constantinople. His successor, Martin, anathematized the 'Ecthesis' and the 'Type' alike. But it was a dangerous act to beard the strong and determined Constantine IV., and Pope Martin's anathema had disastrous results for himself.

We must now turn to the Saracen War, which for the whole of this period is the dominating factor in East Roman history. Alexandria fell during the brief reign of Heraclius II., and the state of affairs at home prevented any immediate attempt to recover it. But the government had no intention of taking the blow calmly; as soon as internal affairs had to some extent been arranged, preparations were made for the reconquest of Egypt. They were interrupted in 645 by a rebellion in Asia Minor, but this was put down, and in 646 the general Manuel recaptured Alexandria. It was once more besieged by Amrú, who, after more than a year, finally retook it, celebrated his conquest by a massacre of its Greek inhabitants, and left it a ruin, not to recover for many centuries. So much indignation is commonly expended over the barbarity of Rome in destroying Carthage and Corinth, that it seems necessary to dwell for a moment on the immeasurably worse barbarity of the much-lauded Arabs. The Roman was savagely cruel at times, but at his worst he conferred a certain benefit upon the peoples whom

he conquered; even the oppressions of such as Verres incidentally inform us that under Roman rule men and cities could become rich. At its best Roman government did much. The Arab could confer no such benefit upon mankind as Rome; his civilization was an exotic and unhealthy growth which withered early.

In 646, Gregory, Exarch of Africa, revolted. The outbreak seems to have been largely in the nature of a protest against the Monotheletism of Constantine. Thereupon the Arabs invaded Africa with a large army, under the Emir Abdallah-abu-Sahr. Gregory was defeated and slain, Tripolis was captured, and the Saracen frontier pushed forward to the Gulf of Gabes; but the Christian population recovered its spirit when once it found the Mohammedans among it, and soon began to wage a fierce partisan warfare against the invaders. The Arabs succeeded in occupying Carthage, but their possession of the famous city was very precarious, and was only rendered possible by the sorely pressed condition of the Empire in the East.

The great Khalif Omár had died in 643; his successor, Othman, was not so strong a ruler, and the Emirs began to fall out of hand. The conquest of Persia also was still slowly proceeding, and the haphazard strategy of the Arabs dissipated their forces all the East over. Still, however, the Mohammedans advanced, though far more slowly than at first. Cyprus was overrun by a dash from Syria, and put under tribute in 643. In 646 a small Roman force, which still hovered in Northern Syria, was beaten back across Taurus, and Saracen

raiders began to appear in Asia Minor and Armenia.

Muaviah, Emir of Syria, must have the credit of being the first to see that nothing decisive could be accomplished against the Empire while it still retained command of the sea. Alexandria was untenable for this reason; in Syria the sea-girt fortress of Aradus was still holding out. Muaviah set himself to build an enormous naval armament. He was much hampered by the fact that the Lebanon region was only partially subdued, and still full of desperate Christians, who waged an incessant predatory war, sometimes raiding almost to the gates of Damascus. Nevertheless, Muaviah persevered, and in 649 a huge flotilla made an attack on Cyprus. This was repelled, but next year Aradus was blockaded, captured and, with the customary blind barbarity of the conquerors, utterly destroyed—another stage in the ruin of the sea-commerce of Syria.

In 651 there were raids into Asia Minor. In 652 the patrician Pasagnathes surrendered Roman Armenia to the Arabs, and such of the towns as did not refuse to submit were occupied. A fresh expedition to recover Alexandria was encountered and defeated by Muaviah's fleet off the Canopic mouth of the Nile—an event of great importance, since thereby the Saracens acquired confidence on the sea. Various attempts made by the Roman troops to recover the lost portion of Armenia were frustrated; and the Saracen navy sailed into the Ægean, plundered Cos, and occupied Rhodes, loading their ships with the fragments of the

famous Colossus, and returning in triumph to Syria.

Muaviah now resolved to strike up the Ægean at Constantinople. It is to be noticed that there had been no attempt to force the passes of Taurus. Constantine had put Asia Minor into a good state of defence. It is to this period that the writer is inclined to attribute the new 'Thematic' military organization, to which reference will shortly be made; it certainly explains satisfactorily the young Emperor's apparent inaction.

In 655 the Saracen fleet started for the Ægean, while Muaviah advanced to force the Taurus passes. Off Phaselis in Lycia, the Arab armament was met by the Roman fleet under the Emperor, and a tremendous battle was fought. Constantine was in the hottest of the fray. His own ship was boarded and taken; he only escaped by a wild leap into another galley which forced its way up to the rescue, while his flag-captain and a remnant of his guards fought to the death to give him time. The overthrow of the Romans was complete. They lost 20,000 men; but their enemies had suffered almost as much, and could not follow up their success. Muaviah had failed to achieve anything in the Taurus region, and, though beaten in the actual fighting, Constantine had evidently gained a strategic success.

In 656 the Khalif Othman was murdered, and civil war broke out among the Saracens. Muaviah, who professed to be the avenger of Othman, prepared to march against Ali in Mesopotamia, but he could not leave the Roman Empire in his rear. He

Schah & Jaillier.

PLATE XII

THE GOLDEN GATE (INTERIOR).

The Golden Gate was used only on State occasions, and then not unless the Emperor was present. It is now built up, the Turks having a tradition that through it a Christian conqueror of Turkey will one day enter.

proposed a truce on the basis that for every day during which it lasted he was to pay the Emperor a horse and a slave. Even granting the urgency of the case, it is tolerably evident that he considered the Empire a very formidable foe; it is possible that he had suffered more severely in his mountain campaign of 655 than we are aware. We may notice that Constantine had had a year in which to prepare for a fresh effort, and evidently his toil had not been without result. That he was right in preferring the truce to further warfare, even with a fair chance of success, is indubitable.

Having secured the Asiatic frontier, Constantine turned to the West, where the Slavs had literally eaten out the heart of the Balkan Peninsula. The stern young Emperor was determined to concentrate his attention upon a thorough reorganization of the remaining strength of the Empire, and he began with the Balkan regions. The Slavs were reduced for the time to complete subjection; large numbers of captives were carried off, and a regular tribute was imposed.

This settlement probably took up most of 657 and 658, and for some three years thereafter Constantine laboured at his task with very considerable success. The fact that he was able soon afterwards to go himself with a great part of his available troops to the West shows that he had satisfactorily arranged matters, and this is further borne out by the fact that the Arabs made no serious impression on Asia Minor during his absence.

The new 'Thematic' system must now be briefly alluded to. It grew out of the military needs of the

Empire, and its development is traced in greater detail in the chapter on the imperial naval and military systems. Here it is only necessary to notice that the whole imperial territory was now mapped out into large military departments, probably at this period twelve in number, varying greatly in extent and in the strength of the forces cantoned in them. The most important was the great Orient or Anatolic Theme—the department of the troops who had contested Syria with the Arabs; none of the others were so large. The general of each theme was also the civil governor—a state of things brought about by the constant pressure of the Mohammedans. The entire force of the themes at this time may have been about 200,000 men, but, of course, only a part of these were available for the field.

The East reduced to order, and in better case for defence than it had been for many years, Constantine turned to the West. In 655 he had succeeded, weak as was his hold on Italy, in laying hands on Pope Martin I. and exiling him to Cherson; but north of Rome his authority was very precarious, and the Lombards, under the great king Rothari, were steadily extending their boundaries.

Constantine's purpose seems to have been to recover the West; perhaps he did not realize that the Lombards were firmly established in Italy, but at all events he was not a man to shrink from any task. Africa, too, had to be recovered. Before he started westward he had one grim deed to do: in 660 he put to death his only brother Theodosius. To expend language over the act is absurd; the

ethics of morality cannot be applied to it. We do not know the cause; we must remember that even brotherhood is not incompatible with treason. The Heracliad Emperors, indeed, seem to have been lacking in natural affection; Constantine IV. was certainly a hard man, regardless of human suffering, but he lived in terrible times. If in his haste and desperate purpose he removed a possible source of trouble, it is well to remember this.

In 662 the Emperor left his capital, never to return. He left his family under the guardianship of the Senate; so dark are the shadows around him that we do not even know his wife's name. In Piræus he gathered a large fleet and army, and sailed to Tarentum. His first quarry was the great Lombard duchy of Beneventum. But the moment of his arrival was ill-timed; Grimwald, its duke, had seized the Lombard crown, and his son Romwald had been left in charge of his ancestral possessions. The whole Lombard kingdom therefore was for once in a state of cordial union. The Emperor, however, overran the entire duchy, and penned up Romwald in Beneventum; but on hearing that King Grimwald was on his way to his son's rescue, he granted him peace on easy terms, and moved off to Rome, leaving 20,000 men under a Persian exile named Shahpur to watch Grimwald. Shahpur was beaten at Forino by Romwald, and possibly the news may have induced Constantine to alter his immediate plans. He remained only twelve days in Rome, and gained a reputation almost as bad as that of Gaiseric, wringing out of the scanty population a forced contribution in money, to complete

which he even stripped the Pantheon of its gilded bronze roof.

Leaving Rome stripped and sullen, Constantine set out for the South; evidently he had made up his mind that the conquest of the Lombards must be deferred. His ascendancy in the field is shown by the fact that he marched from Rome to Rhegium without molestation. He crossed into Sicily, and for the next four years had his headquarters at Syracuse, still a large and important city. His change of plan was largely due to the important circumstance that Muaviah's rival, Ali, was dead, and the former, now supreme in the East, was recommencing his attacks on the Empire. He had already experienced the strength of the Taurus as a defensive line, and was more disposed to push westwards against Africa than to uselessly throw his hosts against the great mountain chain. On the whole Constantine was successful. He recovered Carthage and the surrounding country; and though an army which he sent against Egypt was severely defeated before Tripolis, the Saracens could move no farther westward. It was evident that the Empire could still meet its enemies on equal terms. In Italy, Romwald succeeded in taking Tarentum and Brundusium, but gained no great advantage, and the weakening of imperial rule there was more due to Constantine's crushing taxation than to the Lombards. Defaulting taxpayers were sold into slavery; men said that nothing like Constantine's exactions had ever been heard of; he went as far as stripping the churches of their plate. He was perhaps right—the public necessities were great;

but his proceedings were undoubtedly harsh, and did much to alienate Italian public opinion.

Meanwhile the Arabs each year directed ravaging expeditions into Asia Minor; they were as purposeless as such raids commonly are, but were so far useful to the Saracens that the great army in Asia was kept pinned to its stations and could not be utilized to reinforce Constantine in the West. Otherwise an attempt would probably have been made to reconquer Egypt and Syria from the rear. As it was, Constantine could do no more than hold firmly to Africa and the extreme south of Italy, while the Arab horsemen raided through Taurus.

In 668, Shahpur, the general of the Armeniac Theme, revolted. The rebellion was suppressed with no great difficulty by the government at Constantinople, but the Arabs seized the opportunity to make an unusually determined inroad, captured Amorium in Phrygia, and garrisoned it with 5,000 troops. The place was retaken by escalade, and the Arab garrison exterminated.

Constantine IV. always gives the impression of doneliness; his treatment of his brother emphasizes his terrible isolation. He lived alone in the West; his family never joined him; while he was recovering Africa, holding back the Saracen, gathering strength for a fresh attack on Lombardy or an invasion of Egypt, he was solitary, uncheered by the society of wife or child, probably feared and shunned by the officials and courtiers, who dreaded his stern, fierce nature. Slowly-gathering discontent at last came to a head, and the strange, strenuous, desolate life ended in a strange death. The Emperor one day went to

bathe in the 'Daphne' baths. He was attended by a servant named Andreas, and, having stripped, held out his hand for soap. The man, instead of giving it, smote his master a furious blow on the head with the marble box, and, throwing it away, fled, leaving one of the ablest and strongest of the Emperors of the Roman East lying lifeless, cut off in his vigorous prime.

Constantine IV. was only thirty-eight at the time of his death; we can only wonder what might have happened had he lived and ruled for twenty years longer. He is emphatically a man of whom we would gladly know more. He left Asia Minor solidly organized and defended, the Balkan Slavs reduced to submission; and, established at Syracuse, he had recovered Africa, and was prepared to turn at the right moment on Italy or Egypt. Under his firm rule the Empire had lost very little more territory, and was well organized to meet its foes. The effects of the grim Emperor's work were to be felt in the reign of his son.

Constantine V. was at Constantinople when the news arrived of his father's murder and the revolt of the army in the West. He was only eighteen, but he never seems to have hesitated; he sailed at once for Sicily and quashed the sedition. Mezecius, the Armenian general whom the troops had crowned, was executed, and some at least of his supporters were treated with a severity that showed that the young Emperor had inherited his father's heavy hand. Having put Sicily in order, he started back for the capital in 669. Scarcely had he turned his back on Syracuse, when it was taken and plundered

by an expedition from Egypt. The Saracens made no attempt to retain the place, and the story that they carried off the treasures of Constantine IV. is manifestly highly improbable; we may be fairly certain that they were safe in the holds of his son's galleys on the way to the capital.

When he started for Sicily, Constantine was a smooth-faced youth, but as his ship came up the Golden Horn on his return the spectators saw that his chin was thick with a sprouting beard. The nickname of 'Pogonatus' has clung to him down the ages—a fair example of the absolute caprice of popular nomenclature; for Constantine V. was but one of many bearded Emperors.

Constantine's return was marked by a curious military demonstration by the 'Anatolikoi.' They demanded that he should give his two brothers, Heraclius and Tiberius, an equal share with him in the administration. Constantine appears to have already created them Augusti and his nominal colleagues, but he was resolved to permit no encroachment by soldiers on his imperial supremacy. He suppressed the mutiny with firm determination, but he does not seem to have molested his brothers, though Theophanes says that he slit their noses. The general consensus of modern opinion seems to be that this was done in 680 or 681, when they were deprived of their imperial rank. Both were evidently men of little weight or ability, but they may have been centres of conspiracy; and though the act was a sufficiently cruel and barbarous one, Constantine shrank from fratricide, and this should be remembered to his credit. His treatment of his brothers

is, so far as is known, the one blot upon his character. He was certainly far less harsh than his father, while he inherited a good share of his vigour and ability. He was a worthy member of the great House of Heraclius, a hard worker, a steady fighter, with a high and strong sense of duty, and one who, while having a great opinion of his dignity, was yet moderate and tactful.

Now that Constantine IV. was gone, Muaviah believed that his time had come. In 669 three armies invaded the Empire. One, as we have seen, plundered Syracuse; a second threw itself upon Africa, and, in 670, founded the fortress of Kairwan, only eighty miles from Carthage, to which it constituted a standing menace; the third, under the Emir Fedil, pushed through Asia Minor, and raided the shores of the Propontis.

In 670 and 671 there were only desultory raids on Asia Minor, which were kept at bay with little difficulty; but it was merely the lull before the storm. Muaviah had resolved to break down the stubborn resistance of the Empire by attacking it at its very centre; Constantinople gone, the conquest of its outlying members could be effected at leisure.

In 672 it became known that a vast Saracen armament would be before Constantinople that year or the next. Constantine, like Stilicho in 401, drew back all the troops possible to the point of danger, and stationed his whole available fleet to guard the Hellespont. The troops who kept the Slavs in subjection were withdrawn, and they promptly rose in revolt, and proceeded to blockade Thessalonica. Africa was left to itself. The same was certainly

not the case with Asia Minor. We hear of no conquests of importance there during the siege of the capital, as would have happened had the country been denuded of defenders. It seems very doubtful whether the Saracen force was not mainly transported by sea; certain it is that the fleet was exceptionally strong.

In March, 673, the Saracen armada forced the Hellespont despite all opposition, took Cyzicus, and, based on that town, landed its army in Thrace and proceeded to blockade Constantinople. The fleet took station along the Thracian coast, with its right at the south-wast angle of the city; the army lay encamped before the landward walls. There was much hard fighting; there were attempts to storm, but Constantinople was impregnable. The fleet lay secure in the Golden Horn, and, coming out with the current round Seraglio Point, made repeated attacks upon the Saracen ships, to their loss and demoralization. The strange duel went on for six months; then, in September, the Arabs embarked the blockading army and withdrew to winter at Cyzicus. Their fleet still held the passage of the Hellespont, and was too overwhelmingly strong for the far weaker Roman squadrons to destroy; and by means of convoys, foraging expeditions, and corn grown on Arctonnesos and the mainland, the Saracens had collected supplies enough for the winter.

In the spring of 674 the army was once more landed in Europe, and blockaded Constantinople for several months without the slightest result; in the sequel the Saracens again fell back on Cyzicus,

and prepared for a fresh sally in the spring. Muaviah seems to have resolved to wear down the stubborn Constantine by keeping up siege operations year after year. The idea was good, but not so the tactics of his generals. In the winter the Emperor was left free to reprovision his capital for the next year's ordeal. Then, again, the Arabs were not skilled in sieges; they clearly had no knowledge of Constantinopolitan topography. Instead of directing their attacks upon the point where the walls cross the Lycus Valley, they seem to have made them near the Golden Gate, at one of the strongest parts of the landward barrier. The only circumstance in favour of the success of the plan, as it was carried out, was the possibility that the great city would surrender from sheer weariness of constant leaguer. But Emperor, troops, and people, were solidly united in determination to do their duty; they had risen to the full height of the situation; there is no reason to doubt that the greatness of the occasion was fully understood.

Africa meanwhile was holding out gallantly. Left to themselves, the provincials and troops fought with splendid determination, and repeatedly drove back the Arab invasions. In 676 Kairwan was taken, and, though reinforcements continued to pour in for the Mohammedans from the wild tribes of Barbary, they made no headway. Crete was subdued, indeed, by a force landed in the island by the Saracen fleet; but in Syria the Christians of Lebanon were doing gallant service to the cause, raiding almost to the gates of Damascus and terrorizing the lowlands.

'Greek fire' turns the Scale

The year 676 dragged away without anything decisive occurring at Constantinople, but in 677 matters at last came to a head. For several centuries the Roman siege-corps had employed some kind of incendiary compound of a very fierce nature, as witness Ammianus. The general opinion appears to be that its basis was petroleum; we are told repeatedly and emphatically that it could only be effectually smothered with earth or sand. The obstacle to its effective employment was that it could not be projected to even a moderate distance, since employed at close quarters it was as dangerous to friends as foes. But about this time some kind of a recipe for the manufacture of gunpowder had reached the Empire from China. How or why is a mystery; perhaps the Chinese Government had obtained information as to the desperate plight of the Roman Empire, and dreaded lest their turn should come next; possibly some daring East Roman risked his life to obtain the secret. Be this as it may, the trouble of projection was overcome; the powder was used to project incendiary shells or rockets filled with the fire from tubes, or "siphons." Probably the powder was very bad, and the dangerous compounds were not stored in any great quantity on board ship, for fear of accidents; very possibly they were not employed frequently, owing to the difficulties of procuring enough of the materials for a large quantity of the fire. But on the whole Greekfire was by no means a contemptible weapon, and on favourable occasions it might be very formidable.

Such an occasion was the present one. The

Roman fleet, or part of it, had been fitted with 'siphons'—cannon, in fact—and a bold attack was made on the Saracen fleet, which was completely defeated. The spirit of the whole armament had been greatly depressed by its continued ill success. Its commander-in-chief, Abderrahman, had fallen; so, too, had Abu Ayub, one of the few surviving original companions of Mohammed; and the naval victory completed its demoralization. The army was able to get back to the Asiatic coast, and began to retreat by land, while the fleet sailed down the Hellespont and made its way homeward round the coast. Constantine followed up his success with energy. The Saracen land army was now commanded by the Emir Sofian-ibn-Anf; on his retreat he was overtaken by the pursuing Roman army under the generals Petronas, Florus, and Cyprianus, and totally defeated, with a loss of 30,000 men; only a shattered remnant of the host reached Syria. The fleet was scattered by a storm off the coast of Lycia, and before it could reorganize the Roman navy was upon it, and nearly destroyed it.

Muaviah had done his best, and he had failed completely and disastrously. The loss of life must have been immense, and it was likely to be the more severely felt because, in the nature of things, it fell chiefly upon the native Arabs, who still composed the great bulk of the Mohammedan forces in the East. The 'Mardaites' of Lebanon were wasting Syria; the one success that had been gained by the forces of the Khalifate was in Africa, where Emir Zohar had temporarily recaptured

Kairwan; but the war in Africa was a mere side-issue, and was hardly more than a continuation of the old Roman-Berber guerilla warfare—it did not affect the fortune of the main struggle. The Khalif decided to make overtures for peace before Constantine should make a counter-attack, and the Emperor was willing enough to accede to honourable proposals. He sent the patrician Johannes Pitzigaudes as his plenipotentiary to Damascus, and a treaty for thirty years was concluded. Muaviah gave up all his conquests, and covenanted to pay for every year that the truce lasted 3,000 pounds of gold (about £140,000), fifty Arab horses, and fifty slaves. From all parts envoys poured in to Constantinople to congratulate the Emperor on his splendid triumph, and once more the Empire stood out before the eyes of the world as the leader of Europe. It may be that there were Englishmen among them; certainly there were Avars, Lombards, and Franks. It is probable, also, that the Serbs, Croats, and others, at this time made formal proffer of allegiance; the Slavs, who all this time had been swarming about Thessalonica, were driven off and again coerced into submission.

The triumph of Constantine was a great one. Had Constantinople fallen, the consequences must have been terrible. Lombardy was weak and disunited, while Francia was in a state of anarchy. Visigothia was being ruled by the last of its vigorous Kings, the famous Wamba, but was without real strength; it was to collapse like a house of cards before a small expedition thirty years later. The salvation of the Empire was the salvation of Europe,

and to the great Heracliads must the chief glory be given.

The peace did not lead to a cessation of hostilities in Africa, where the irresponsible Mohammedan Emirs continued to make attack after attack, all of which were stoutly met and repulsed, for the Emperor could now spare assistance to his gallant liegemen. Two years later, in 679, there was an unfortunate mishap in Europe which ultimately led to serious consequences, but at the time it did not appear to be of any great importance.

A tribe called the Bulgarians, probably of Turkish race, had long been domiciled on the middle Volga, and a part of them had joined the Avars in their advance westward. After 626 they had revolted, and their king, Kurt, had made an alliance with Heraclius. In 679 they crossed the Danube, and began to settle in Mœsia, now only inhabited by a sparse population of Slavs. Constantine promptly took an expedition by sea to the mouth of the Danube, but after some preliminary success a panic seized part of the army, and while in confusion it was attacked and cut up by the Bulgarians. Mœsia was practically worthless, and Constantine decided not to attempt for the present to further molest the intruders. He gave them permission to settle, subsidizing them to refrain from raiding Thrace, and thus for the present matters were left. He probably intended to subdue them later, but, as it happened, did not live long enough to do so.

His last six years were passed in well-deserved peace. In 680 he decided to call a General Council

of the Church to dispose of the Monothelite heresy. His reputation was shown by the eagerness with which his proposals were accepted, and his courtesy and tact were well displayed in his dealings with the Pope and other patriarchs of the Christian faith. An assembly of over 170 delegates from all parts of the Christian world finally met, under the personal presidency of the Emperor, in a great domed hall of the Imperial Palace at Constantinople; and after eighteen sittings Monotheletism was condemned, and the doctrine enunciated that in the Saviour's Being there are two natural wills and two natural energies, without division, alteration, separation, or confusion. To the lay student this appears involved, but it was, and is, highly satisfactory to ecclesiastics; and the successful outcome of the Sixth Ecumenical Council put the keystone on the arch of the glory of Constantine, who had now, at the age of thirty, saved his heritage from imminent peril of destruction, forced his most terrible enemy to a humiliating peace, and had quelled the dissensions in the Christian Church.

Meanwhile, in 680, Muaviah had died, and the Khalifate had become involved in civil war. His successor Yezid at once renewed the treaty with the Empire on similar terms. In 683 Kairwan was taken once more by the army and provincials of Africa, and the country swept clear of its enemies. In 684 Abd-Almalik, engaged in strife with other candidates for the Khalifate, hastened to secure himself by renewing the peace with the Empire; and secure on every hand, victorious and renowned in war and peace, honoured alike in East and West,

Constantine might well look forward with confidence to the future, and anticipate many years of peaceful revival and reconstruction. But it was not to be. In 685, at the age of only thirty-six, cut off like his father in his vigorous prime, Constantine V. died, leaving the throne that he had defended so well to his youthful son, Justinian II.

E. Alinari.

MOSAIC OF CONSTANTINE V. ('POGONATOS') IN SAN VITALE.

Constantine, with his brothers and nominal colleagues, Heraclius and Tiberius, grants a charter of privileges to Archbishop Reparatus. Date about 669.

CHAPTER VIII

DESTRUCTION OF THE WORK OF THE HERACLIADS

Justinian II.—His errors and fall—An age of usurpers—Loss of Africa—Ability of the Empire to hold its own when capably ruled—Restoration and end of Justinian II.—Destruction of the work of the Heracliads.

THE early death of Constantine V. was for the Empire a disaster of the first magnitude. His heir was a lad of sixteen. Justinian II. had all the fierce courage of his warrior line and a fair share of their capacity. But he had had no time to acquire experience. He had not been brought up, like his father, in the school of adversity; he could recollect only victory and peace, and knew nothing of the terrible struggle that had been waged to win them. He was reckless and high-handed, callous to suffering, perhaps not untainted with insanity—cursed in any case with a savage temper, which led him into the commission of every kind of injustice and cruelty.

At the opening of his reign all went well. Constantine V. had probably designed an expedition against the Christian kingdoms beneath Caucasus, with a view to bringing them into direct subjection to the Empire. Iberia and Albania were invaded

by Leontius, general of the Anatolikoi, with a large army, and reduced to subjection. Justinian was gratified by the news of victory, and, what was also of importance, considerable returns of tribute money. The Khalif Abd-Almalik, engaged in strife with powerful rivals, renewed the peace on terms outwardly far more favourable to the Empire than the treaty between Constantine V. and Muaviah. The revenues of Iberia, Armenia, and Cyprus, were to be equally divided between the two empires, and the Khalif engaged to pay annually 365,000 nomismata (£228,000), 365 Arab coursers, and 365 slaves; but the young Emperor in return agreed to the removal of the Mardaites from Syria, and directed Leontius to co-operate with the Khalif in effecting the deportation. Leontius behaved with gross treachery to his co-religionists; he caused the assassination of a chief who was the strongest opponent of the migration. Eventually the removal was carried out. Twelve thousand Mardaite warriors were enrolled in the Roman army; colonies of them were established at Attalia in Pamphylia and in Thrace; a portion still remained in Lebanon, but the advantage which the Empire had derived from the operations of this warlike community at the very gates of Damascus was lost for ever (687).

For the present, probably, the Roman government congratulated itself on the acquisition of a strong corps of experienced soldiers. Many Syrians had taken advantage of the presence of the army of Leontius, to migrate under its escort into the Empire. Justinian also persuaded or compelled a great part of the Cyprian Christians to settle in the north-west

of Asia Minor. Needless to say, all these forced migrations and settlements must have been attended with great difficulty and expense, and probably some loss of life; but they were at least well-intentioned.

Having thus arranged affairs in Asia, Justinian in 689 marched against the Slavs of Balkania, who were again, owing to the arrival of the Bulgarians, in a state of ferment. The expedition was a complete success, the Bulgarians and Slavs entirely defeated; 30,000 prisoners were taken and enrolled as auxiliaries in the imperial army in Asia.

At home, however, Justinian was already becoming unpopular. It is possible that he had some idea of emulating Justinian I.; his general policy is often a caricature of, perhaps consciously modelled upon, that of the earlier Emperor. Justinian II. formed great schemes of foreign conquest; he also indulged in building on a grand scale; naturally, he was soon forced into copying the worst part of his namesake's policy—his fiscal extortion. The cruelty of his agents, Theodotus, one of the worst of ecclesiastical politicians, and the eunuch Stephanus, soon made the young Emperor's name detested—not without reason, for he made no attempt to restrain them; he is even said to have allowed Stephanus to beat his own mother, Anastasia, the widow of Constantine V., without inflicting upon him any adequate punishment. We can only hope that the shameful story is a fabrication.

For Justinian's next and most fatal action there is no excuse to be found. In 692 he declared war on Khalif Abd-Almalik—because the yearly subsidy

was paid in new Arab dinars bearing a religious inscription! The Khalif would probably have remained at peace but for this frivolous and outrageous quarrel-picking, but as it was he was fairly well prepared, having put down rivals and revolts; and there can be no doubt that he was entirely in the right.

Justinian led a large army, including a contingent of his Bulgars and Slavs, into Cilicia, and at Sebastopolis sustained a heavy defeat. His unwilling recruits deserted to the Saracens, and the prestige of victory passed again to the Crescent.

All the work of Constantine V. was undone; the Arabs pushed through Taurus into Asia Minor; great part of Roman Armenia was lost owing to the treachery of its governor, a native named Sembat, who deserted to the Khalif. In 694 and 695 the line of Taurus was repeatedly penetrated, and the border provinces wasted. Justinian's misfortunes stimulated his cruelty to excess; he not merely massacred the wives and children of the Slavonic deserters, but put to death numbers of the corps who had remained faithful. He distrusted everybody. He imprisoned Leontius, who appears to have served him faithfully; senators and officials were seized and executed on mere suspicion. He was detested alike by people, army, and civil service, and had no supporters except Theodotus and Stephanus, who were more hated than himself.

In 695 he suddenly released Leontius, and appointed him to the command of the theme of Hellas. The general regarded himself as a doomed man, and in his despair broke into revolt, with only a few friends and their servants to back him. They burst

open the State prison, liberated and armed the hundreds of political prisoners, and, followed by them and by a mob of exasperated citizens, dashed at the palace. The guards were taken by surprise, perhaps were disaffected; Justinian was captured with Theodotus and Stephanus. Leontius, with utterly misplaced mercy, for which he was later to pay with his life, spared the fallen tyrant the death penalty, but slit his nose and banished him to Cherson. Theodotus and Stephanus were delivered to the tender mercies of the mob, and their end is best passed over in silence.

The deposition of Justinian was merely a stage in the period of anarchy, which was to last yet for twenty-two miserable years. So far the succession of the Emperors had for the most part been peaceful and unopposed; the elevations of Phocas and Heraclius are the only real exceptions to the general rule. But the enterprise of Leontius was merely the first act in a perfect carnival of military caprice and licence. In the general disorder and lack of supervision, the civil adminstration lost rapidly in efficiency, and the instinct of loyalty, which had appeared to be greatly strengthened under the strong, brave, and popular Heracliads, was lost. The troops, engaged more and more in civil war, became demoralized; they were not often at their post on the frontier, and the Saracens made headway almost without opposition.

At first these evils were not very apparent; Leontius was a capable man, and at any rate was not disposed to laze away his time on the throne. His first year was comparatively peaceful, but in

697 Lazica revolted to the Saracens, and Africa was invaded. Kairwan was once more taken; and Hassan, the Arab general, advanced upon Carthage and captured it, soon becoming master of most of the province. Leontius was already preparing an army for its reconquest, under John the Patrician; it arrived too late to relieve Carthage, but recaptured the city and several of the lost fortresses. But Abd-Almalik, neglecting the war in Asia, poured in reinforcements; the Romans, beaten in a sea-fight, were finally forced to abandon Carthage, and this time the loss was not to be retrieved (A.D. 698).

Some of the defeated Roman generals, fearing the anger of Leontius, plotted his deposition. The commander-in-chief was removed by assassination, and the fleet sailed for Constantinople. Leontius was seized and his nose slit; he was confined in a monastery, and Apsimarus, general of the Naval Theme, proclaimed Emperor under the title of Tiberius III.

Tiberius III. was a strong, capable soldier, who in better circumstances might have founded a dynasty. He appointed his brother Heraclius Cæsar and commander-in-chief in Asia, and Heraclius was not slow in proving that he was worthy of his name. In 700 he crossed Taurus, captured Mopsuestia in Cilicia, and burst into northern Syria. He laid waste the whole country, took many towns, captured Antioch, and finally withdrew unmolested, bringing back immense spoil and no less than 200,000 captives or emigrants. During 701 and 702 the war languished, Abd-Almalik being perhaps more occupied in

Africa and Armenia. In 703 the province of Armenia IV. (Sophene) was invaded and overrun by the Arabs, but this was offset by a great victory gained by Heraclius in Cilicia. Next year he recovered the remainder of Cilicia, and confirmed the reconquest by another great defeat of the Arabs. Cyprus was also recovered and repopulated; it appeared as if the Cæsar Heraclius might rival the deeds of his namesake.

But the year 705 was to see an end of all these fair hopes. Justinian II. was still alive. After a long detention he had escaped from Cherson, and taken refuge with the Turkish Khazars. He was well received by the Khan, who gave him his sister in marriage. The lady was baptized as a Christian by the name of Theodora. Justinian's mutilation was probably more nominal than real; he certainly seems to have inspired his bride with devotion, if not love. Tiberius III., hearing of his adventures, bribed the Khan to give up the refugee. Theodora warned her husband; he sprang upon the emissary who came to seize him, killed him, and fled out to sea with his few attendants in an open boat in a violent storm. 'We shall drown!" cried one frightened man as the little craft laboured amid the raging billows; 'it is for the Emperor's sins! O Augustus, swear to pardon your enemies, and God may save us yet!' 'No!' shouted the desperate exile; 'God drown me here and now if ever I spare one of them when my time comes!' Justinian was most unkingly in his cruelty and recklessness, but at least he had a king's courage.

The storm went down, and Justinian safely made

the coast of Bulgaria. He ingratiated himself with King Terbel as easily as with the Khazar Khan; he promised him the title of Cæsar and a further strip of country south of eastern Hæmus. Terbel was gained over to the exile's cause, and Augustus and Cæsar started for Constantinople. The city was betrayed by Heracliad sympathizers; Tiberius III. was taken in the palace, and Leontius dragged out of the monastery in which he had been confined for seven years. They were bound hand and foot and laid side by side on the platform of the Kathisma in the Hippodrome. Justinian sat with his feet on the necks of the vanquished Emperors, while his triumph was celebrated by chariot races, and his adherents cried: 'Thou shalt trample on the Lion and the Asp.' Then the two unfortunate men, who were certainly worthy of a better fate, were dragged round the city and beheaded. The great general Heraclius was seized in his camp, brought to Constantinople, and hanged with all his chief officers.

For five years there was a reign of terror. The savage Emperor maintained his recovered rule by sheer blind cruelty. The Patriarch Callinicus, who had crowned Leontius and Apsimarus, was blinded; everyone whom Justinian suspected of having borne the slightest part in his humiliation was doomed. The army was decimated by executions; the best of the defenders of the Empire were sacrificed to Justinian's insane thirst for blood.

Justinian's foreign policy was chiefly governed by his desire for vengeance. In 706 he quarrelled with Terbel of Bulgaria, but the difference was composed. The war with the Saracens meanwhile dragged on

its disastrous course. Abd-Almalik had died in 705, but his successor, Valid, continued the struggle. The victories of Heraclius had evidently cowed the Saracens considerably; though very feebly opposed by the decimated, badly-officered, and ill-commanded Roman troops, they took four years to slowly recover Cilicia and the Armenian border; but in 710, after much desultory raiding, they firmly established themselves on Roman soil by the storm of the great Cappadocian fortress of Tyana. Justinian seems to have made no serious effort to bar their progress; he was busy in the more congenial task of taking vengeance on his enemies within the Empire. In one direction only does he appear to have continued the policy which he had followed at the beginning of his reign, and which, as has been suggested, had probably been traced out by Constantine V.; he sent about this time a mission into Iberia to keep the Caucasian mountaineers faithful to the Christian cause, and prepared to follow up his diplomacy by the despatch of an army. The mission was under one of the imperial spatharii (aides-de-camp), Leo 'the Isaurian,' the son of a Syrian settled in Thrace, who had rendered service to Justinian when on his way to recover his throne in 705. Having despatched him, the Emperor was seized with an insane fit of suspicion, and held back the army, thereby leaving Leo helpless among the naturally distrustful and treacherous mountaineers. He only saved himself by dint of never-failing resource and pluck, but eventually succeeded in picking up a stray company of Roman troops which had lost itself in the mountains, and made his way

down to Phasis in 713. The affair is mentioned chiefly because it introduces us to a man who was presently to become famous and immortal.

There is a certain pleasure in turning for a moment from the blood-stained and disastrous annals of this gloomy period to Justinian's private life. He did not forget the brave barbarian bride who had risked so much for him, and one of his first acts was to send a fleet to bring her to him, if necessary by force. It met, however, with disaster in a storm, and the Khazar Khan wrote to his brother-in-law—one wonders if he had really intended to kidnap him—to say that no fleet was necessary; why could he not send like a brother and friend? Justinian thereupon sent a small squadron, and the Khazar Empress, with the baby boy whom she had borne to her husband during his absence, arrived safely at Constantinople. She was crowned Augusta by her terrible spouse, who really seems to have felt strong affection for her; the child was baptized Tiberius, and proclaimed Augustus and colleague of his father. We hear no more of Theodora. She did not long survive; probably the maiden of the steppes languished amid the perfumes of the palaces of the Roman Emperors; but the little that we know of her is very much to her credit, and her name deserves to be saved from oblivion.

Having cleared his home provinces, to the best of his ability, of suspects, Justinian turned his attention elsewhere. Ravenna and Cherson were marked out for vengeance. Ravenna was treated with barbarous cruelty; even worse was the fate of Cherson, to which the Emperor had a special

aversion as being the place of his exile. He sent thither a powerful expedition with orders to sack and destroy it. The commanders shrank from the literal execution of the savage command, but Justinian, hearing that the town had not been destroyed, ordered the expedition to return and complete its task.

The fleet sailed, but mutinied, proclaimed an Armenian named Vardan Emperor, under the title of Philippicus, and, returning, seized Constantinople while Justinian was absent at Sinope. Justinian at once marched in wild rage on the capital, but his army abandoned him *en masse;* his hideous cruelty had destroyed the last remnants of the loyalty of the troops to the Heracliad warrior-Emperors, and he was seized and beheaded, emitting threats to the last.

One child now alone remained of the great imperial line; the little Tiberius had been taken by his grandmother Anastasia to the Church of the Virgin of Blachernæ. Philippicus sent a band of his followers, under an officer named Struthas, to kill him. They found the child clinging to the altar, his neck hung with sacred relics, clasping a fragment of the Holy Cross; while his honoured grandmother, the widow of the great Constantine Pogonatus, stood beside him. The murderers forced her away, dragged Tiberius from the altar, tearing the holy relics from his neck, wrenching the sacred wood from his hands, and, carrying him to the door, cut his throat on the steps. There are red pages in Byzantine history, but in its naked horror, in its combination of hideous brutality with sacrilege, in its utter dis-

regard of every law, human and Divine, this murder of a helpless child in the presence of an aged relative seems the foulest of all. The Roman Empire had indeed been degraded to the very dust when its nominal head could order the commission of deeds that would ill become a King of Dahomey. Yet this horror was no more than the expression of the universal demoralization of which we have seen terrible traces in the reign of Heraclius, which had seemingly progressed still farther under his successors. Art, science, and literature, were at a low ebb; religion largely consisted in the practice of grovelling rites of superstition; culture and enlightenment had nearly perished. We shall soon meet with a hideous example of the utter demoralization of the people at large, their hopeless ignorance, the shocking barbarity of the practices in which their craven superstition found its vent. Morally the Empire could sink no farther; politically the worst was yet to come.

The first year of Philippicus was marked by widespread disaster. King Terbel invaded Thrace to avenge Justinian II.; the Saracens captured Amasea, the home of the Achæmenids of Pontus, and practically made themselves masters of north-east Asia Minor. In the far west they inflicted a crushing blow on Europe by the conquest of Spain.

Philippicus was a mere glutton and drunkard; his one positive act was to make confusion worse confounded by re-establishing the Monothelite heresy. In 713 the Saracens again invaded Asia Minor, pushed across Cappadocia and Lycaonia, and

stormed Antioch-in-Pisidia. The Khalif Valid considered that the time had come to renew the attack on Constantinople. The way through Asia Minor was practically clear, and the enterprise was less difficult than it had been forty years before, while the Khalifate under Valid was much more powerful than it had been under Muaviah. Not only Syria and Egypt, but the newly conquered Africa also, were called upon to supply ships; the armament was to be such as had never been seen since the days of Xerxes.

In 713 Philippicus was removed by a haphazard conspiracy, seized at his drink, blinded, and thrust into a monastery. In his place the conspirators crowned the First Secretary of State, Artemius, who assumed the title of Anastasius II. He was a man of considerable capacity, but his name carried no weight either with the army or the officials, who, since the death of the strong Justinian II., had usurped much of the imperial authority, and despite his good intentions he could do little. He did his best to prepare for the impending blow, repairing the walls of the capital and gathering in supplies; he appointed the spatharius Leo 'the Isaurian,' general of the Anatolic Theme; Artavasdos, an Armenian officer of approved capacity, was placed in charge of the Armeniakoi. Anastasius undid the evil work of Philippicus by formally restoring orthodoxy in the Church. In 715 he determined to make an attempt to burn the Saracen fleet fitting out in the ports of Syria. The expedition, consisting of a strong fleet and the troops of the Opsikian Theme, was placed, most unwisely, under a civil

official, Johannes the Grand Treasurer. An able soldier was absolutely necessary for the conduct of so important an enterprise; the appointment of Johannes irritated the troops. A mutiny broke out at Rhodes, Johannes was killed, and the fleet and army returned to depose Anastasius. The mutineers picked up at Adramyttium a popular tax-collector named Theodosius, and, presumably because they felt assured of perfect licence under a nonentity, invested him with the purple. Theodosius III. was a quiet and amiable man, and seemingly accepted the crown in fear of his life; he was perfectly sensible of his unfitness for the post to which he had been elevated.

The mutineers defeated Anastasius, and after a long blockade entered Constantinople. The new Emperor amnestied all his opponents; he could hardly have done less than to compel his fallen rival to take the tonsure. For about a year he held his nominal imperatorship, but practically controlled only Constantinople and its neighbourhood. Leo and Artavasdos had not been able to come up in time to the rescue of Anastasius, and the danger in Asia Minor was so great that they dared not leave their posts; but they paid no attention to the puppet Emperor. Leo was more immediately in danger than his colleague, as the fortress of Amorium, the present objective of the Saracens, lay in his own theme. After much manœuvring, some desultory fighting, and long negotiations with the Saracen commander-in-chief Maslama, Leo succeeded in saving Amorium, and in inducing the enemy to withdraw. Quite possibly he was

guilty of treachery—or diplomacy, to use the polite modern word; it may be that his only object in getting rid of Maslama was to be able to declare war on and depose Theodosius. In September he advanced towards the Bosphorus, and defeated the Opsikians commanded by the son of Theodosius. He then occupied Nicæa, from which famous city he could keep a watch on the Saracens, and at the same time negotiate with the Theodosians at Constantinople. He was clearly in no hurry to grasp the prize; perhaps, too, his position, with the impregnable capital still defiant behind him, and Saracen hosts, for all he knew, moving against him in front, was not an enviable one. But early in 717 the Theodosians yielded; the great Saracen expedition was almost ready to start, and precious time was being wasted. Theodosius himself was perfectly ready to abdicate; his patriotic action deserves to be remembered. He retired into private life, and the crown was offered to Leo, who formally accepted it. He entered Constantinople on March 25, 717, and rode to the Church of the Divine Wisdom, where he was crowned; and after twenty-two years of agony, the Empire had once more a master.

CHAPTER IX

THE REPULSE OF ISLAM

Leo III.—Critical state of the Empire — Its disorder and degradation—Decisive defeat of the Saracens before Constantinople—Consolidation of Leo's power—'Iconoclasm'—Leo's reforms—Opposition to his religious policy—His general success—His death—Estimate of his work.

CONON of Germanicia, Leo III., 'the Isaurian,' is one of those men of whom we know too little. His enemies have been his historians, and how much they have blackened his fame we can only guess. They have not merely misrepresented the great Emperor's character and aims; they have concocted petty tales as to his origin and upbringing which still further serve to obscure his personality.

On the whole it is probable that Leo III. was not an Isaurian at all, but a North Syrian, perhaps of Armenian descent. His true name appears to have been Conon, and he would seem to have been born at Germanicia in Commagene. When, however, we first meet him, we find him living with his parents in Thrace. Mardaites of Syria had been settled in Thrace by Justinian II.; the inference is that Leo's father was one of them. We

E. Alinari.

BYZANTINE SARCOPHAGUS IN THE CHURCH OF S. APOLLINARE IN CLASSIS, THE ANCIENT PORT OF RAVENNA.

obtain our first notice of the future Emperor in the year 705, when Justinian II. with his Bulgarians was advancing on Constantinople. He was sent by his father with a present of 500 sheep to the Emperor; clearly they were people of some estate. Justinian perhaps discerned his ability; at any rate, he gave him a commission as 'spatharius' (aide-de-camp). Leo's subsequent life and adventures have been briefly alluded to down to the day when he was crowned Emperor. We know hardly anything of his private life; he was perhaps thirty-five years old in 717, and had a daughter of marriageable age—that is to say, she would be about fifteen. He was yet to have a son, and the wide gap between his two children makes it possible that he was a widower, and contracted a second marriage about the time of his accession. The name of the mother of his only son was Maria; she is said to have also been a native of Germanicia. If we are permitted to draw any inference from the fact that very early in his reign Leo had her crowned Augusta, he loved and honoured her.

Never had the political sky appeared so black. Heraclius had at least one faithful province to which he could retire in case of disaster, but now Africa had been in Saracen hands for eighteen years. Asia Minor, so well guarded under the Heracliads, had been repeatedly ravaged; several of its greatest cities had fallen. The European provinces, if we may judge from their conduct soon after, were apathetic, if not actively disaffected; Italy was merely an open sore; Leo's authority was probably confined to the shores of the Propontis.

He was known to be an able man, but his puritan religious tendencies were probably also known, and would hardly increase his popularity; and ability and energy had not saved Leontius and Tiberius III.

Shattered as was the Empire outwardly, its internal condition was yet worse. The never-ending wars of the sixth and seventh centuries had reduced it to a condition almost of barbarism. The one good effect of the general uncertainty had been that serfage had died out; there was a large and vigorous class of small-holding farmers, a good omen for the future. But in everything else the decline had been great. Of the demoralization of society during the Heracliad period and the 'First Anarchy' some instances have been given; art was at a low ebb; literature had nearly died out; for a century the Empire produced not a single historian, and only one bad poet; ignorance and grovelling superstition were rife. Yet the peoples who inhabited the yet broad provinces of the shattered Empire had in them the capacity of self-improvement. Though in Asia Minor the original population had been thinned by war and its concomitant evils, it had been swelled by great immigrations from Armenia, Persia, and Syria. The result was that, while the old population of the Empire had fallen off perhaps 40 or 50 per cent. since 540, the loss had been largely made up. Further, the peasantry as a whole had better chances of naturally increasing in number than under the old cast-iron Roman administrative system. Could the Saracens be beaten off, there might yet be a chance for the stricken Empire to recover itself.

Preparations of Leo

The Emperor strained every nerve to strengthen the capital for the coming siege. What the result of his endeavours was is doubtful; there is reason to believe that in more than one respect they had comparatively small effect. It must be remembered that the normal civil population of Constantinople was about half a million or more, swelled in the present instance by troops and probably refugees; the practical difficulties of keeping it adequately provisioned must have been enormous. Anastasius II. had issued an order that every householder was to lay in two years' supply of breadstuffs. For many this must have been an absolute impossibility; probably even those who could afford the large outlay would have found themselves unable to comply with the order, simply because, though they might be willing enough to buy, the necessary quantity of corn would not be forthcoming. Orders of this kind are likely to remain dead letters; it is practically certain that Leo's nightmare was a complete blockade of his capital.

As to the strength of the garrison we know little. It was sufficient for its purpose, but probably not much more than sufficient; Leo ventured, as far as we know, only one sortie in force, and this was very late in the siege, when presumably a sufficient proportion of the citizens had been trained to relieve the regular troops in guarding the walls. The main strength of the garrison at the outset probably consisted of Leo's own Anatolikoi, but it included the whole or the greater part of the imperia. navy, a factor of supreme importance. It is not too much to say that everything depended upon it; yet it was

too weak to face the great Arab armada in the open.

The Saracens had planned a double advance by land and sea. The land column concentrated at Tarsus under Maslama; it consisted of about 80,000 cavalry on its arrival at Constantinople. The fleet was led by Suleiman, the Grand Vizier; it counted 1,800 vessels of all descriptions, and had on board a force of 80,000—certainly infantry. Probably the number of war vessels was not above 400, but, as they each carried 100 soldiers, they were evidently of considerable size. Arab chroniclers, who had every reason to wish to minimize the greatness of the host, and by consequence the magnitude of the disaster, estimate the total fighting force engaged in the siege at 180,000; and in all probability this was merely the land army; the number of marines, seamen, rowers and camp-followers, must have been very large. We must never forget that this was the supreme effort of a mighty Empire, which for a brief period was the most fiercely vigorous that the world has ever seen. Maslama marched from Tarsus on the Hellespont, while the fleet made its way slowly round Asia Minor into the Ægean. Two more fleets, counting 800 ships, were slowly preparing for sea in the ports of Africa and Egypt, and a third army was mustering at Tarsus, which the Khalif Suleiman proposed to lead himself to the scene of action.

The advance was slow. Maslama did not reach the neighbourhood of the Hellespont until July, a circumstance which leads to the inference that his march was impeded by immense baggage and supply

E. Alinari.

MAUSOLEUM OF GALLA PLACIDIA, RAVENNA.

Three sovereigns of the Theodosian line were here laid to rest: Constantius III., second husband of Placidia (422); Honorius (423);

trains. He turned aside to besiege Pergamus, a reasonable measure of precaution, since the fortress lay dangerously near his left flank, but involving further waste of time.

Some of the Pergamenian garrison, fearing that the place would fall, resorted to magical rites. They murdered a pregnant girl, cut the body and that of the unborn babe to pieces, and boiled them in a caldron. The perpetrators of this frightful piece of butchery then marched past, and each dipped his right hand into the hideous mess, in the hope that thereby his strength might be redoubled! The affair is even more horrible than the slaughter of the last Heracliad, and after it we can have no sympathy for the garrison, though the writer does not feel himself obliged to be indignant because they repaired their ramparts with fragments of the great Altar of Athene; in terrible emergencies the refinements of civilization must go to the wall.

Having taken Pergamus, Maslama advanced to the Hellespont, where he was met by the fleet, which conveyed his horsemen across the strait and disembarked its own troops. The army then marched for Constantinople, capturing or occupying the places on the road; on August 15, 717, it was before the landward walls.

Maslama spread his huge force across the peninsula, probably also occupying Pera, across the Golden Horn. The Saracens entrenched themselves behind huge 'sangars' of piled-up stones. A part of the army was detached into Thrace to observe Adrianople, where there are indications that a Roman force of some size was stationed. Leo was also in

communication with King Terbel, to whom he no doubt pointed out that a Mohammedan invasion was as dangerous to him as to the Empire.

On September 1, after a delay of eighteen days, probably consumed in landing and forwarding troops and stores, the Saracen fleet arrived. For two days it lay off the Propontine shore near the Golden Gate; then on the 3rd the huge unwieldy mass got under way to occupy the strait above the Golden Horn. This movement could not be allowed to be carried out unopposed.

The imperial navy lay in the Golden Horn, the mouth of which was protected by a boom, consisting of a chain carried on logs and made safe at each end in strong, well-garrisoned towers. The current off Seraglio Point is violent, and the heavy Saracen vessels made slow progress and began to fall into confusion. A gap was made in the boom, probably by towing its end aside, and the Roman ships, the Emperor leading the way, came out with oar and tide, and were among the Saracen armada before it could form a line of battle. Taken thus by surprise, the Arabs could do little; the terror of the Greek fire cleared a way for the Christian ships; twenty vessels were destroyed, and a number taken and towed back into the harbour of Constantinople. When the main body of the Arab fleet began to work its way up to the rescue, the far inferior imperial squadron had to withdraw, but its confidence had risen enormously. The Emperor ordered the boom to be towed completely aside, and for the rest of the day and all night the Roman fleet lay in line of battle across the harbour's mouth, defying the

enemy to come on; a battle in narrow waters was the one thing Leo most earnestly desired; but the 'maritime fire' had badly demoralized the Saracen crews. Suleiman refused to repeat the blunder of Xerxes, and fell back down the strait. The all-important waterway to the north was left open, and though the Emperor had been disappointed in his hope of entirely defeating the Saracen fleet, he had struck a heavy blow at its *morale*, and, strategically, obtained the advantage. The Saracen commanders resolved to fall back upon the slower but safer method of blockade; they evidently knew more than we do of the state of the city's supplies.

Fortune was against them. Suleiman died on October 8, perhaps partly from exposure. Next, the winter set in with terrible severity. Snow fell early and heavily, and the men began to die fast from the effects of the unaccustomed cold. We do not know that they suffered from hunger; they would hardly have come with only a few weeks' supplies; the cold is quite sufficient to account for their wasting away. Meanwhile in the city, whatever may have been the Emperor's anxieties, the garrison was fairly well fed, well covered, and continued to improve in *morale*.

For many weeks—for a hundred days, say Theophanes and Nicephorus—the snow covered the country, and the Mohammedans could hardly have maintained the siege in the spring of 718 but for their heavy reinforcement. The Khalif ate himself to death at Damascus during the winter, but the army at Tarsus went on under the Emir Merdasan. The Egyptian squadron reached the scene of action

in the spring, 400 strong, under the Emir Sofian; it succeeded in passing Constantinople, perhaps in the night, and took station at Kalos Agros (Buyuk-deré, or Therapia), above the city, thus blocking the Bosphorus. Soon after the African fleet of 360 ships, under Yezid, also arrived, and moored along the Bithynian shore of the strait. Finally, Merdasan's army occupied the heights of Chalcedon. With Maslama's resupplied and reinforced army on the land side, the great capital was completely beleaguered. The Egyptian and African ships were protected by the fierce current against fireship attack; the position was undoubtedly critical.

The newly arrived squadrons, however, contained many Christians, who had little heart in their work. Some of them succeeded in escaping to Constantinople in boats, and furnished the Emperor with accurate information upon the position of the Saracens. Leo wasted no time. Once more the boom was opened, and the fleet put out on its momentous errand. Guided by the deserters, it came upon its opponents unprepared and at anchor; the engagement that followed was a rout rather than a battle—another Ægospotamoi. The Christians deserted their masters wholesale, and ranged themselves on the side of the oncoming Romans; the Moslems, demoralized by the suddenness of the attack, could do little; into the helpless mass of vessels crashed the Roman 'dromons,' ramming, boarding, using their fire-tubes with desperate energy. Many ships were burnt, many boarded and taken, many forced ashore; for all practical purposes the African and Egyptian fleet was

destroyed. All the troops who could be spared from the garrison were embarked on the victorious ships, ferried across the Bosphorus, and landed on the Asiatic shore; and by a well-planned attack the army of Merdasan was beaten, cut up, and driven back into Asia Minor.

Leo's envoys had at last convinced Cæsar King Terbel that his interests were those of the Empire, and he was on his way to assist in the defence of Constantinople. The summer was now well advanced, and the army of Maslama was dying fast from disease and famine. Yet it still showed a bold front behind its 'sangars,' and Leo had not troops enough to attack it in its entrenchments; the fleet, though demoralized, was still large in numbers, and Maslama would not abandon the siege. Terbel forced his hand; uniting probably with the Roman force at Adrianople, he encountered Maslama's covering army near that city, and routed it with a loss of 22,000 men. The survivors fell back on the camp before Constantinople, and their arrival completed the demoralization of the perishing Saracens. Without delay the remains of the army were hurried on board the fleet, taken across the Propontis, and landed near Cyzicus. The fleet cleared the Hellespont safely, but once out in the Ægean it was shattered and dispersed by a storm. The Roman fleet, which was following from Constantinople, captured or destroyed many of the scattered ships; others were destroyed by the Greeks of the islands; of the 1,800 Syrian ships, it is said that only five returned! At any rate the losses were terrible; not for thirty years did the

Khalifate again send a large fleet to sea, while the unhappy land army, stricken with plague and famine, was further harassed and reduced as it struggled on across Asia Minor, so that Maslama eventually reached Tarsus with only 30,000 exhausted men out of a host which even the Moslem chroniclers rate at 180,000. When we consider the army of Merdasan, the swarms of camp-followers, and the crews of the three fleets, it is probable that the entire loss of life was even greater than is indicated by these figures.

Judging from such records as we have, the affair was a catastrophe of the magnitude of the destruction of Napoleon's army in Russia in 1812. There were certain factors in the favour of the Eastern Romans: their tactical position was very strong; their inferiority of force was offset to some extent by superior training; their fleet was good and armed with some sort of rocket tubes, very efficacious against Arab ships. On the other hand, the land forces were so inferior in numbers that up to the end Leo could not attack the Arabs in their camp. The strategic position had its weak points, the chief one being the line of supply through the Bosphorus. The fleet won most of the credit for the fine defence; it invariably fought with admirable readiness and discipline, and was handled in the most masterly manner. It checked the establishment of the naval blockade at the outset, and broke it when it was temporarily formed in 718; it enabled the army in Constantinople to operate at will on either shore of the Bosphorus, and it followed up the retreating Saracens and completed the ruin of

the great armament. The one weak point in the conduct of the defence may appear to be the Emperor's refusal to take the offensive at the end of the siege, but we must remember that we know very little of the existing circumstances. With this single doubtful exception, Leo seems to have made no mistake; he had won the greatest success in Roman history (August or September, 718).

As he saw the relics of the mighty host of his enemies staggering away in rout and misery from the virgin walls of his capital, Leo's heart was gladdened also by the thought that he was no longer sonless. About the end of the siege his wife Maria had borne him the boy who was to be Constantine VI., and to carry on his father's work. The mother was crowned Augusta on Christmas Day, 718, in the grand Hall of Augusteus; and, in ancient fashion, she came out among the people and flung handfuls of gold to them. Next year, on March 25, the child was crowned as his father's colleague.

Leo's authority was not yet, by any means, fully established. In 719 the ex-Emperor Anastasius II. rose against him. The European provinces were in his favour; he was supported by several great officials, and persuaded King Terbel to assist him. The Bulgarians began to advance on Constantinople from the north, but Leo's personal influence quelled the revolt almost without a blow. The Bulgarian king probably saw that there was no popular movement in favour of the deposed Emperor; he handed over Anastasius and his chief supporters to Leo, and returned to Bulgaria, to die in the following year. Leo executed Anastasius, and had no more to fear

from the North. In 720 a revolt in Sicily was suppressed by the general Paul, and Leo was able to press forward his reforms.

As to the internal condition of the Empire, enough has been said to make it clear that, though not without certain cheering features, it was very bad. Externally, the last great mainland province in the West had gone. In the Balkans the one solid block of territory held was Thrace; elsewhere only the coast districts were regularly administered, the interior regions being held by Slavonic settlers, who required constant punitive expeditions to keep them in subjection. Asia Minor by the close of Leo's reign was again thoroughly reorganized and solidly occupied up to the line of the Taurus, and Cyprus was also, for the present, back in Roman hands.

Leo's purpose was steadily set to gather together the strength of the Empire between Hæmus and Taurus. He was still in the vigour of life and flushed with a splendid victory; but without hesitation he resigned all hope of recovering for the present anything that had been lost by his predecessors. He took the field only twice again, leaving the work of repelling Saracen raids to his generals, and concentrated all his attention on the gigantic and, as it must have seemed at first, almost hopeless task of revival. He seems to have deliberately let Italy go; he had apparently come to the conclusion that it was a mere incubus. There can be no doubt that he was right, but it required a man strong among the strongest to declare so much; under a democratic government the deliberate abandonment of a useless possession would be an impossibility.

Sébah & Foaillier.

PLATE XVI

ST. IRENE, CONSTANTINOPLE.

Formerly the metropolitan church of Constantinople. It is now a Turkish armoury, but has never been converted into a mosque, and could be again used for Christian worship almost without alteration.

Leo made only one digression from this policy during his reign, and his failure probably confirmed him in his original resolution. The other object of his foreign policy was, of course, the defence of his dominions against the Arabs, in which he was successful.

Leo's internal reforms are to be divided into civil, military, and religious; they may be summed up in general by saying that he reorganized the civil and defensive services; reformed police control; re-established the rule of law and order; reformed the judicial system; reorganized the finances; encouraged commerce and industry; and made a great effort to combat the prevailing barbaric ignorance and superstition by his so-called 'Iconoclastic' policy.

The details of these reforms are to be gathered from Leo's famous legal manual, the 'Ecloga,' which, though not published until the end of his reign, expresses well the work of his life. It is to be noted that the spirit of the work is not that of the old Roman, non-religious; but decidedly Christian.

The barbarism of the times is more or less expressed in the punishments for certain offences; death is comparatively rare, but mutilation common, of infliction. In private law we note that a concubine has all the legal rights of a wife, and that the father no longer has unlimited powers over his family, but shares them with his wife. The Agricultural Code shows that serfage had disappeared, and that the peasants were all free, divided between freeholders, tenants, and communal holders; the latter were probably chiefly Slavs, the communal

system being distinctly Slavonic. The Maritime Code informs us that commerce was largely carried on by joint stock companies. In finance Leo enforced the principle of solidarity ; each agricultural community was responsible collectively and individually for the amount of its taxes, and no doubt, so long as the obligation was not crushing, the system worked well ; each member had an interest in seeing that land was not allowed to fall out of cultivation through its holder's laziness. The great feature of the Criminal Code is its democratic tendency ; there is no attempt, as in the Code of Justinian, to fix different punishments for rich and poor ; all classes alike must pay the same penalty for their misdeeds—a clear advance in the interests of justice. The purity of the judicial administration was greatly enhanced by the establishing of fixed salaries for the officers of the law, who hitherto had depended on presents and fees. Of the Military Code there is little to say : the soldier's dignity is insisted upon ; men convicted of sexual immorality or connivance at such are to be cashiered ; soldiers must not engage in any trade ; the cross and the stake await treasonous deserters.

Something has been said of the gross ignorance and superstition which reigned in the Empire, which perhaps found its worst expression in the dreadful Pergamenian incident, but was rife among all classes, including even men like the reigning Patriarch Germanus, whose reputation for purity and goodness was great. While the tendency existed everywhere, and was especially strong in the European provinces, there was a decided movement in pro-

gress against it, especially among the better educated and informed officials and citizens, and very strong in the army, which was in constant contact with a faith of which the best feature was its emphatic denunciation of idolatry in any shape or form. The rational arguments against the adoration of mere pictured or sculptured images are strong, and there is no reason for believing that Leo was incapable of appreciating their force. The fact that he did not make any decided move for eight years shows that he had carefully considered the question.

Leo's 'Iconoclastic' edict was issued in 726. It forbade image-worship as superstitious and irreverent, and ordered the whitewashing of the pictured semblances of saints on the church walls, as well as the removal of statues. Rioting immediately broke out. When the palace officials began to remove the great crucifix over the main gate, a mob fell upon them and cudgelled them to death. The troops and police cleared the streets and killed a number of the rioters. Having put down disorder, the Emperor set up a cross in place of the crucifix, with an inscription explaining the reason of the change, and everywhere pictures and statues were replaced by the symbol of the Christian faith; Leo did his best to make it plain that his objection was to the anthropomorphic representations of the Saviour, and the absurd superstitions which had collected about the use of images and pictures.

This moderation, however, was far from contenting the clergy, who for the most part were as ignorantly superstitious as their flocks. Asia Minor as a whole stood by the Emperor; the Armenian,

Syrian, and Isaurian mountaineers had no love for elaborate symbolism, and had felt, too, the force of the taunts of the Mohammedans. In Europe the state of affairs was different. In Italy, the Pope, Gregory II., led the opposition. The Italian cities would have set up a rival Emperor, but the Pope was afraid of the great Lombard king, Luitprand, who was formidable and near at hand, and gave no approval to the extreme step. As it was, the mischief was done; Luitprand overran the Exarchate, and captured all its towns with the exception of Ravenna, which, after temporarily falling into his hands, was retaken by the Exarch Eutychius in 729.

Nearer home matters were still more threatening. In 727 the theme of Hellas revolted, and proclaimed a certain Kosmas Emperor. It was probably supported by other European districts. The Greeks were all for image-worship, and it is possible that they were restive under Leo's new fiscal and administrative measures. Greece was evidently already recovering from the effects of the Slavonic immigrations, for the revolting province raised a large army and fleet, which, under a general named Agallianos, and accompanied by its Emperor, boldly set forth to attack Leo in his capital. Leo moved out to meet the rebels, and completely defeated them. Agallianos killed himself; Kosmas was taken and beheaded, but the Emperor showed himself very clement towards the prisoners and the rebel province. He was never afraid to strike hard, but no stain of unnecessary cruelty disfigures his character.

Leo's domestic troubles encouraged the Khalif Hisham to recommence raids on the Empire, and in

726 a small Saracen army invaded Cappadocia. In 727, while Leo was busy with the Greek revolt, two great armies entered Asia Minor under Maslama. Cæsarea in Cappadocia was taken, while a force pushed forward to Nicæa, but was repulsed. In 729 Leo held a 'Silentium' at Constantinople, which condemned Içonoduly; and finding that the ancient Patriarch Germanus would not work with him, the Emperor deposed him. Next year Leo removed Illyria, Calabria, and Sicily from the jurisdiction of the Pope, and united them to the patriarchate of Constantinople. In 732 he sent an expedition against Italy, but it suffered much damage from storms, and effected nothing; and thenceforth he seems to have definitely resolved to let the valueless central Italian districts go.

Leo's last eight years were for the most part a period of progress, although the border provinces were harassed by sporadic Saracen raids. The work of reorganization was steadily continued; it was probably in these years that the 'Ecloga' was compiled, though it was not published until 740. In spite of much secret opposition, especially from the clergy, the 'Iconoclastic' edict was generally enforced. One of the Emperor's measures was the establishment of a register of births, and we get some insight into the ignorance and impracticability of the clergy when we hear that they violently opposed this sensible innovation. Towards the end Leo was assisted by his son Constantine, already a strong and vigorous young man, in full sympathy with his father, who carefully trained him to follow in his footsteps.

In 739 there was a more serious Saracen invasion, in which 90,000 men took part. So serious did it appear that Leo took the field in person, and young Constantine accompanied him to see the practical application of the military wisdom which he had learned from his father. We are told that 70,000 Saracens remained in comparative inactivity near Taurus, while only 20,000 horsemen, under the famous Abdallah Sid-el-Batal, advanced through the Anatolic Theme. I am much inclined to doubt whether a mere plundering force would have brought Leo out in person, and it is quite possible that the greater part of the Saracen invading army composed the force which pushed past Amorium to Acroïnon, where Leo and Constantine met and completely defeated it, with the loss of Sid-el-Batal and all its principal leaders. Leo returned to Constantinople in triumph, to resume once more his great task. In 740 the 'Ecloga' was published, and with it Leo put the capstone upon his work. He had done so much that all that remained for his vigorous successor was to follow steadily in his footsteps. The rebuilding of the walls of Constantinople, which had been shattered by an earthquake in 739, and the promulgation of the 'Ecloga,' were his last important acts. He died on June 18, 740, having raised the shattered heritage of the Cæsars from the deepest depths of degradation, and set it once more on the highroad to recovered power and prosperity.

Leo's best monument is his work. We know little of his personality, and that comes from his bitter enemies; but we need the words of neither friend nor foe: the facts as we know them are

convincing. The eighth century was an age of great men—it was the era of Charles Martel, Pippin, and Charles the Great, in Frankland; of Ine and Offa in England; of Luitprand in Italy; of the great Ummeyad Abderrahman of Cordova; of the Abbasids Mansúr and Harún, as well as of the great Iconoclast's great son—but Leo need fear no comparison with any of them. There was no statesman among them to compare with him, except, perhaps, Charles the Great—certainly no such legislator and administrator. As a soldier he was at least the equal of the Karls and of his own warlike son. Morally he stands on a level with the best men of any age. He came to an Empire in ruins, cowering before the impending onslaught of its most terrible foes. He opened his reign with the most splendid victory in history, saving his realm and religion from destruction, once more staving off from Europe an attack that could not have been resisted; out of the wild chaos about him he built up a fresh, and in many respects an entirely new, structure of Empire, throwing into the tremendous task a fierce and enduring energy, a stern and pure religious enthusiasm. Where he inherited ruin and misery, he left strength, order, peace, and reviving prosperity. Almost the last act of his life was to lead his armies once more to victory. He went down to the grave in the fulness of years and glory, and left the completion of his life-work to a son after his own heart and of his own mind—almost as brave and able as himself.

CHAPTER X

THE ICONOCLASTS

Constantine VI.—A threefold struggle against Saracen, Bulgarian, and internal disaffection—Triumphant Iconoclasm—Constantine VII. and Irene—The reaction against Iconoclasm—Irene's usurpation—Disorder and political decline—Estimate of the work of the 'Isaurians.'

LEO'S natural successor was his only son, Constantine VI., but he was not to obtain the supreme power unopposed. Artavasdos, general of the Armeniac Theme under Anastasius II., had supported Leo III. in 717. Leo had given him to wife his only daughter Anna, and had created him Curopalates and Count of the Opsikians. He possibly considered himself, as husband of the great Emperor's elder child, more entitled to the throne than Constantine. His elder son, Nicephorus, was general of Thrace; the younger, Niketas, commanded the Armeniacs; he secured also the support of Theophilus, Prefect of the Capital. Whether he really had any strong belief in Iconoduly is to be doubted, but he expressed himself in sympathy with the opponents of Leo's policy, and the revolt against Constantine may be termed an Iconodulic one.

Constantine had determined to make an expedition

against the Saracens in 741. He moved to the plain of Krasos with his guards, and sent orders to Artavasdos to join him with the Opsikians. Artavasdos killed Biser, the patrician who brought the order, assumed the diadem, and made a dash at his brother-in-law's camp; Constantine only saved himself by a headlong flight to Amorium. There he was safe; the garrison swore to defend him to the death. Artavasdos returned to Constantinople, and was proclaimed Emperor amidst the rejoicings of the Iconodules; but the Anatolikoi and Thracesians would have none of him, and marched to the rescue of Constantine in Amorium. Constantine, with his army in a high state of enthusiasm, advanced to Chrysopolis, but he found Artavasdos too strong to be besieged without a fleet, or some appearance of disaffection in the capital, of which there was at present none. He therefore withdrew to winter at Amorium, and to call up the Kibyrraiot* fleet and army to his assistance.

In the spring of 742 Artavasdos advanced to crush him, while Niketas marched westward with a second large army, composed partly of the fine Armeniac troops, partly of levies and mercenaries from Iberia and Armenia. Constantine at Amorium was thus exposed to a converging attack by vastly superior numbers, but he showed that he possessed all his father's military ability. Artavasdos hoped to force Constantine to dislocate his army and fight both himself and his son with inferior numbers. Instead of doing so, however, Constantine marched

* The Naval Theme was now named after its headquarter port of Kibyra.

westward with his whole force, and coming up with Artavasdos near Sardis completely defeated him, and drove him back on Cyzicus and out of Asia. He then faced round on Niketas, who was approaching from the north-east, and defeated him at Modriné in Bukellarion, after a struggle far harder than the battle of Sardis, for the Armenian troops fought magnificently. Constantine now crossed into Europe and besieged Constantinople, bringing up the Kibyrraiot fleet to complete the blockade. The citizens deserted to him in crowds as food began to run short; by the admission of his hostile historians, his conduct was humane and forbearing in the extreme.

Meanwhile Niketas had rallied his beaten army, gathered in reinforcements, and effected a junction with some troops who had escaped the rout of Sardis. He advanced to relieve Constantinople, but near Nicomedia he was met by the indefatigable Constantine, completely defeated, and taken prisoner together with the Iconodule Archbishop of Gangra, who was immediately executed. Niketas was exhibited in chains before the walls of the capital, and Artavasdos knew that the game was lost. He fled from the city to a fort in Opsikion, where he was captured, with his elder son and some of his chief adherents.

Constantine entered his capital victorious, after having lost it for two years. He spared the lives of Artavasdos and his sons, but blinded and imprisoned them: the act seems barbarous, but it was perhaps the only alternative to putting them to death; and they had been guilty of treason in an aggravated form.

Constantine 'Kopronymos'

Once firmly seated on the throne, Constantine could take up his father's half-finished work. He had been carefully trained in Leo's methods, and was his not unworthy son and successor, hard-working, hard-fighting, persevering, able, and brave; and not destitute of originality in his designs, if we may be permitted to judge from the fact that he endeavoured to enter into closer relations with the Frankish rulers of the West. Morally he was certainly the inferior of his father, whose purity even his bitter foes have not impugned. Constantine was distinctly a man of pleasure, somewhat coarse-fibred, occasionally given, as it would seem, to low debauchery, though we need not believe that he was addicted to vice in especially bad forms; his monastic revilers were not men of nice or elevated minds; such would not have fastened the unsavoury epithet of Kopronymos on him. He was also, when exasperated by opposition, capable of cruelty; though he was equally distinguished on occasion for humanity. On the whole he gives the impression of being more swayed by passion than his father. His worst political fault was that he could not understand or practise a policy of conciliation, and his violent measures against his opponents did the cause of rational progress far more harm than good. As Emperor he had to maintain the Asiatic border, to secure that of Europe, and to carry on the work of internal development, the last involving a continual struggle against Iconoduly. He thus had to face a threefold contest, and that he emerged from it on the whole victorious says much for his untiring energy.

For eleven or twelve years after his victory over Artavasdos he steadily pursued the policy of his father in religious matters, but probably with a harder hand, and growing more and more exasperated as he found his edicts secretly evaded, and everywhere steadily and fanatically opposed by the monks. The most noteworthy incident of these years was, however, the appearance of the bubonic plague in the Empire. It did not have the same terrible effects as in the reign of Justinian; the population was better able to recuperate. But none the less it caused great harm; at Constantinople the loss of life was enormous. The Emperor filled the gaps in the population of the capital by introducing settlers from Hellas and the islands; the effect was that it became more Greek than it had ever been, while, on the other hand, the districts from which the immigrants had come were colonized by Slavs, and for the present lost their Hellenic nationality.

Externally, Constantine's energies were during this period chiefly directed to the East. The Ummeyad line of Khalifs was hastening to its end; civil war distracted the Saracens, and Constantine took advantage of their dissensions to take the offensive. In 745 he overran Commagene, captured Germanicia and Doliche, and transported the bulk of their Christian inhabitants into the Empire. The Khalif Mervan II. retaliated by sending an armament of 1,000 vessels against Cyprus, but it was caught by the Kibyrraiot fleet in the harbour of Kerameia, and almost annihilated, A.D. 746. The plague prevented further efforts for some years, and in 750 a disaster was experienced in the West by

the final loss of Ravenna, which was taken by King Aistulf of the Lombards. In the same year the great House of the Ummeyad Khalifs came to an end in a deluge of blood; and in 751 Constantine again crossed the Taurus, captured Melitene on the Euphrates, ravaged the border provinces, and took Theodosiopolis. He does not appear to have had any illusions as to the possibility of holding these conquests; he took back with his columns as many as possible of the Christian inhabitants, and distributed them as settlers in his provinces; but he left garrisons in the captured towns.

Meanwhile the opposition of the monks to his Iconoclastic religious policy had impelled him to take a decisive step. He summoned, in 753, a General Council of the Church. As a fact, the Patriarchs of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch, declined to attend, and the Pope of Rome not only refused, but anathematized the assembly. But 338 bishops assembled under the presidency of Constantine, Patriarch of Constantinople, and gave decisions entirely in favour of Iconoclasm, defining representations of our Saviour as blasphemous pitfalls, because they endeavoured to express His human and Divine natures in the mere likeness of a man, and so obscured His Divinity in His humanity. It declared the worship of images blameworthy, because all adoration, except that paid to the Godhead, savoured of heathendom and anthropolatry. It can hardly be doubted that in the main these decisions were at least rational, but the Council put itself in the wrong by proscribing religious mimetic art entirely, and by anathematizing the Patriarch Germanus,

the famous John of Damascus, who upheld Iconoduly on the ground that pictures and images inculcated reverential ideas, and George of Cyprus, the three most distinguished of the opponents of Iconoclasm.

Having obtained the support of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, Constantine began a regular persecution of his opponents. He was chary of inflicting the death penalty, but there was a great deal of torture and imprisonment, or exile. In 766 the Patriarch Constantine was found to be concerned in a conspiracy against the Emperor. He was executed under every circumstance of cruelty and ignominy. Several prominent Iconodules had already suffered death ; and now Constantine gave full way to his feelings of bitterness, and appointed the sternest and most uncompromising Iconoclasts to command in all the themes. They are said to have carried out their orders with extreme brutality, though it would appear that it was still almost entirely directed against the monastic order. The most prominent of them was Michael Lachanodrakon, general of the Thracesian Theme, who is said, amongst other things, to have burnt or half burnt many monks alive. In 770 he assembled all the monks and nuns of his theme, and gave them the alternative of breach of their vows or immediate exile to Cyprus. Many gave way, but more stood firm, and were forthwith deported. Lachanodrakon then plundered the religious houses of their valuables, realizing thereby a large sum, destroyed the pictures and relics, pulled down some of the buildings, and converted others to secular uses. Constantine's comment on these violent proceedings was that at last he had found a man after

his own heart. On the whole we can understand the indignation of the monkish annalists.

Meanwhile, Constantine was busy in Europe. He was determined to reduce the European lands of the Empire to the same state of order as those in Asia Minor. The main obstacle was the presence of the Bulgarian kingdom. For many years it had been on friendly terms with the Empire, but the predatory instincts of the people continually gave rise to petty warfare, and when Constantine began to establish a strong military frontier along the Balkans, King Kormisos declared war. The Bulgarians poured through the Balkan passes into Thrace, and were assisted openly or secretly by the Slavs, but they were eventually beaten and forced back. Constantine fortified the passes, and, having thus cut off the Bulgarians from communication with the Slavs, marched through the settlements of the latter in 758, and brought them once more under control. Next year he turned against Bulgaria, but his first efforts were unsuccessful; he suffered a severe defeat between Mesembria and Varna; while in Asia the Saracens under the energetic Khalif Mansúr, who had succeeded Abdallah the Bloody in 754, recovered Germanicia and Melitene, and defeated the Armeniacs on the Melas. The renewed activity of the Khalifate probably called the Emperor to the East, but in 762 he again took the field, and inflicted a great defeat on the Bulgarians and Slavs at Anchialus. He then, in the following year, turned against the Slavs south of Hæmus, again reduced them to subjection, and cleared the frontier districts of the

brigands (Skamars) who had long infested them. Great severity was exercised towards the prisoners; one notorious chief, a renegade from Christianity, was dissected alive. The punishment was not, perhaps, altogether undeserved, but this problematical circumstance cannot be allowed to absolve the Emperor from the charge of barbarous cruelty. Meanwhile Bulgaria was distracted by civil war, and reduced to such a wretched condition that 208,000 Slavs migrated in a body to place themselves under the protection of the Empire. They were settled on the Artanas in Bithynia.

In 764, Constantine, taking advantage of the dissensions in Bulgaria, invaded the country, killed King Toktu, and wasted the land without mercy right down to the Danube. He intended to complete the conquest in the next year, but his huge flotilla of 2,600 boats was wrecked near Anchialus, and he then abandoned his design, and turned his attention to rescuing the survivors of the disaster and securing Christian burial for the dead, thereby greatly increasing his popularity, even with the Iconodulic population of his capital.

For some years thereafter the Emperor was busy with his last dead-lift attempt to crush Iconodulism and monasticism. There was a good deal of guerrilla fighting in the Balkans, but the Bulgarians made no impression on Constantine's strong military frontier. In Asia he was less successful; in 771 a Saracen army and fleet besieged Syké in Isauria, and the Anatolic, Armeniac, Bukellarian, and Kibyrraiot themes, marching to its relief, were severely defeated. The Saracens, however, made no use of their victory,

and withdrew homeward. Next year a Saracen force made a successful incursion, but on its return was defeated near Mopsuestia, with a loss, it is said, of 10,000 men.

In 773 a peace was concluded with Telerig, the new King of Bulgaria. The treaty was a mere blind on the part of the latter to cover an invasion of the Empire as soon as the large army which Constantine had under arms had been disbanded. The treacherous design became known to the Emperor, and when the Bulgarians entered Macedonia they were suddenly surprised by Constantine at the head of 80,000 men, and totally routed. He now determined to make an end of the troublesome half-barbarian state once and for all, but fortune was against him. The march of the great expedition which he had planned was stopped in 774 by the shattering of the fleet which formed part of it in a storm, and in September, 775, he was taken ill on his northward march, and died on board ship just outside Constantinople. He was only fifty-seven, but his strenuous life had no doubt worn him out. He had carried steadily forward the work which his father had so well begun; the Empire was well organized, strong to defend itself, and increasing in wealth and prosperity. The defensive services were strong, well organized, well trained, and composed in larger measure of native troops than had ever been the case before; the thematic system had been completed, and in Asia alone could put 80,000 men into the field. Literature and art were reviving; best of all, the whole moral tone of society was greatly improved. To attribute all this to the great Icono-

clast Emperors is, of course, absurd, but they had a very large share in this extraordinary revival of an apparently decrepit and half-barbarized state; if they did no more than direct the tendencies of the age, they deserved well of their subjects.

Constantine was succeeded by his son Leo, commonly known as the Khazar, his mother, the first of his father's three wives, having been a princess of that nation. He had acted as his father's colleague for several years, and inherited the vigour which was the birthright of his line; but his health was feeble—he was, in fact, consumptive. He was married to a beautiful Greek from Athens, named Irene, destined to a terrible celebrity in history, and to a very undeserved sanctity in the Church. By her he had a son named Constantine, born in 771. The Emperor's feeble health made the question of the succession a momentous one. By his other wives Constantine VI. had had several children, including five sons, and Nicephorus and Christophorus, the two eldest of these, who each bore the title of Cæsar, conceived themselves entitled to succeed their half-brother. Leo therefore crowned the little Constantine VII. with great solemnity, and obliged his five uncles to swear allegiance to him.

Internally, Leo IV. pursued the policy of his father, but with less harshness. He was certainly alive to the possible evil effects of high-handed severity; he stopped the persecution of the monks, though in 777 there was again an increase in the harshness of government measures against them. Leo's severities were rather political than religious

in their tendency; he had found that his discontented half-brothers were in league with the Iconodule malcontents in a conspiracy to place Nicephorus and Christophorus on the throne. The leading plotters were scourged and banished, but the Cæsars were pardoned by their injured half-brother.

In 778 Leo collected all the Asiatic themes, except the Kibyrraiots, at the frontier, and ordered them into Syria. They were at least 80,000 strong, so great had been the results of the military reforms of Leo III. and Constantine VI. The lack of an imperial commander-in-chief rendered the campaign somewhat ineffective; but Commagene was wasted, a great Saracen army defeated before Germanicia, and a mass of Syrian Christians conducted into the Empire and settled in Thrace. The Khalif El Mahdi replied next year by an invasion of Asia Minor; the Saracen army advanced to Dorylæum, but failed to take it, and retreated in disorder, suffering heavily from the attacks of the imperial troops.

In 780 more vigorous measures were adopted. El Mahdi's famous son Harún was sent to take command, and a great irruption organized. Harún took the frontier fort of Semaluos, but another division was defeated by Michael Lachanodrakon, and the expedition had no result. In the midst of these events Leo IV. died, on September 8, leaving his throne to the young Constantine VII., now ten years of age, for whom Irene was to act as regent. Leo was only in his thirty-second year, and his premature death, though not unexpected, was a grave misfortune for the Empire.

Irene, an Athenian and a Greek, was naturally enough an Iconodule, though she had more or less concealed the fact from her husband and her terrible father-in-law. She was determined to reverse the policy of the Iconoclasts, and began by putting a stop to all anti-Iconodulic measures of repression. Her position as regent was by no means assured. Nicephorus and Christophorus repaid their half-brother's clemency by resuming their plots as soon as the breath was out of his body, and enlisted in their cause Elpidius, general of Sicily, and several other officers and ministers; but the plot was soon discovered and crushed by Irene, and the Cæsars and their three brothers compelled to take holy orders. The other conspirators were for the most part scourged and tortured; Elpidius fled into the Khalifate, A.D. 781. Meanwhile the Saracens, under a general named Abd-el-Kebir, invaded Asia Minor. Irene acted with vigour on this occasion. She dared not or would not trust any of the thematic generals, who were all Iconoclasts, but the chief command was given to Johannes the Sacellarius; the whole army of Asia, 80,000 strong, was concentrated on the frontier in July, and the Saracens totally routed at Melon.

Next year came a turn of fortune. Harún again took the chief command; this time the Saracens crossed the frontier before the themes could concentrate. One division, under Rabia-ibn-Yunes, besieged Nacolia without success; a second, under Yahya the Barmecide, was beaten by stout old Michael Lachanodrakon; but Harún, with 95,000 men, was able to advance to Chrysopolis; and for

BYZANTINE COINS (OBVERSE AND REVERSE).

The two top coins, of Constantine the Great (left) and Pulcheria (right), belong to the Late Roman Period. Second row: Phocas (left), Heraclius with Constantine III. (right). Centre: Constantine IV. (above), Leo III. (below). Large coins: Basil II. and Constantine IX. (left), Michael IV. (right). Few Byzantine coins bear any attempt at likenesses of the Emperors, but the effigies shown have some claim to be considered as portraits.

the last time a Saracen army saw the city of the Cæsars. Tatzates, the general of the Bukellarians, deserted to Harún; the Slavs in Europe broke out into renewed revolt, and Irene was cowed. She bought a truce for three years at the rate of 70,000 dinars a year.

Having in this disgraceful fashion rid herself of Harún, Irene set herself to deal with the Slavs, and in 783 sent Stavrakios, a eunuch of her household, with a large army against them. The campaign was entirely successful; the Slavs in Macedonia, Thessaly, and Hellas, were brought into complete subjection to the central government. The work was completed in the following year, when Irene and her son made a progress through the European provinces, and re-established and repeopled a number of decayed Greek towns. It was natural that the Athenian Empress should take a great interest in her own countrymen, and this pacification and reorganization of Macedonia and Greece was the most useful work of her life.

Irene endeavoured to follow in Constantine VI.'s footsteps with regard to the West. She entered into friendly relations with Charles the Great, and a treaty was concluded by which the young Constantine was betrothed to Charles's yet younger daughter Rotrudis.

In 784, Paul, Patriarch of Constantinople, died, and Irene replaced him by Tarasius, the First Secretary of State, a known Iconodule. She had for some time been carefully preparing the way for a reversal of the Iconoclastic policy, by dismissing as many as possible of the officials of her husband and

father-in-law, but found that there was still much to do. The troops were very largely Iconoclast in their sympathies, and broke out into repeated tumults. To break their opposition, Irene disbanded them wholesale or dispersed them in distant cantonments, a most ill-advised measure, seeing that the truce with the Khalifate expired in 786. Finally, after three years of preparation, an assembly of 367 ecclesiastics gathered under Tarasius at Nicæa, in September 787. Its decisions were as anti-Iconoclastic as those of the Council of 754 had been anti-Iconodulic, and it anathematized all the Iconoclast Patriarchs. It drew, however, a distinction between the reverence due to the pictured semblance of the Deity or saints and the Divine worship to be paid to God.

Meanwhile the foreign affairs of the Empire were giving trouble. In 788 the Bulgarians burst through the Balkans, raided Thrace, and defeated Philetos, who commanded its troops, on the Strymon. Next year the Saracens, now ruled by the energetic and cultivated, but cruel and suspicious, Harún 'er-Rashid,' invaded Asia Minor, and defeated a part of the Eastern army. In 790 there was a fresh raid by land and sea, and for the first time for many years a Saracen fleet gained a success, defeating the Kibyrraiot squadron under Theophilus off Attalia. The admiral was taken prisoner, and, refusing to abjure Christianity or desert his country's service, was put to death—an act which gives a true impression of the character of the much-lauded butcher of the Barmecides.

While foreign affairs were thus in disorder, Irene's

position at home was tottering. In 790, Constantine VII., now over twenty years of age, would endure his mother's domination no longer. It cannot be said that his revolt was either premature or undutiful. His first attempt was frustrated; Irene punished his supporters with much severity, and actually imprisoned her son. This, however, was the last straw. The Armeniac troops declared in his favour, and marched for the capital; the other corps of the army hastened to join them. Irene, in terror, released her son, who presented himself to the advancing army, and was joyfully hailed by them as Emperor. He punished his unnatural mother only by confining her for a time to the precincts of the palace.

In 791 the young Emperor invaded Bulgaria, now under King Kardam, without result, and then turned to the East and conducted a raid into Cilicia. Next year he again marched into Bulgaria, with disastrous results. He was entirely defeated, and lost many of his best officers, including the veteran Michael Lachanodrakon, 'the man after my own heart' of Constantine VI. The beaten troops murmured at the Emperor's bad generalship, and in the capital there was a fresh conspiracy in favour of the five half-brothers of Leo IV. The plot was discovered; Nicephorus was blinded, the tongues of the other four cut out, and all were banished. The act was perhaps justifiable—the princes were incorrigible plotters; but Constantine had evidently inherited the vice of cruelty, whether from his grandfather or his mother it is difficult to say.

Constantine's next blunder was to restore his

mother to favour and power; he never appears to have lost his affection for her, and he celebrated the reconciliation by raising a statue of her in the Hippodrome.

Irene repaid her unhappy son by resuming her intrigues so soon as she was restored to power. Constantine meanwhile diligently continued to dig his own grave. He alienated his faithful Armenian troops by blinding their general, Alexius Muselé, who had led them to his assistance in 790. The alleged reason was conspiracy. Next Constantine, without more reason, became involved in a quarrel with the clergy. We have seen that as a boy he had been betrothed to Rotrudis, the daughter of Charles the Great; but after the Council of Nicæa Irene broke off the engagement, and practically forced the unhappy boy into a quasi-marriage with a Paphlagonian girl named Maria. Constantine seems to have felt a sort of romantic affection for his unknown Frankish betrothed, and he soon developed a bitter feeling of hatred for his nominal wife, who was probably as guiltless as, and even more helpless than, himself. His hatred was quickened by his falling in love with Theodota, one of his mother's maids of honour. He determined to rid himself of Maria, and, after much delay, coerced the Patriarch Tarasius into pronouncing a formal sentence of divorce. Irene's unfortunate tool disappeared into a nunnery. Constantine thereupon was free to espouse Theodota; but public sympathy was strong for the divorced Empress, and it cannot be said that it was unjustified. The clergy voiced it energetically, prominent among

them being Plato, Abbot of the great monastery of Sakkoudion in Bithynia, and the afterwards celebrated Theodore 'Studita'—the latter himself a relative of the new Empress. Constantine attempted coercion; but they would not give way, and public opinion was entirely with them (A.D. 795).

Constantine, having married a wife of his own choosing, went to the East on an expedition against the Saracens, leaving the field clear for the intrigues of his mother. He ravaged Cilicia, and defeated a Saracen army at Anusan. Next year Kardam of Bulgaria, presuming on his great victory in 792, sent an insulting demand for tribute to the Emperor. Constantine, in wild rage, collected the Asiatic themes, and sent the Bulgarian a parcel of horse-dung—one cannot admire his taste—with the message: 'Here is a tribute well fit for thee. Come and take more if thou choosest; but as thou art old, and mayst grow tired in the journey, I will meet thee at Markellon!' (a border fort). So great was the Emperor's strength that Kardam fled across the Danube; Constantine, after wasting the country, marched home. In the absence of many of the Asiatic troops, the Saracens pushed another of their ineffectual raids up to Amorium. In 797 the Emperor again took the field and invaded Cilicia, but his mother's intrigues among the general officers insured the futility of the expedition. On his return, Irene, who had prepared all for his deposition, carried her design into effect. Constantine was seized by his own attendants, but escaped for the time, and might have again gained the upper hand. But he seems to have been dumbfounded by his mother's

conduct, and made no great effort. He was finally captured, taken to Constantinople, and blinded, with a refinement of barbarity, in the Porphyry Chamber, in which he had been born. It seems probable that he died soon after. Such was the end of the last Emperor of the great 'Isaurian' House, to which the Empire had owed more than to any other of its imperial lines. The only remaining scion of the family was Constantine's little daughter Euphrosyne, whom her grandmother spared.

Irene had now attained the object of her unprincipled ambition. She was still only in middle life, but she would seem to have expended all her energy in her years of intriguing for her son's ruin. At all events, she gave herself up to self-indulgence and display, and handed over the business of the State to seven eunuchs, hardly exercising even a nominal superintendence over them. Her reign was in the highest degree unfortunate and disgraceful. The Khalif Harún again invaded the Empire, and made his way without opposition to the walls of Ephesus, wasting the Anatolic and Thracesian Themes and carrying off numbers of captives. Irene's miserable government again purchased peace, and Harún was willing enough to withdraw, for the Khazars had burst through the Caucasian passes and were wasting Armenia.

In 799 there was a revolt in Hellas of the Slavs settled in the interior, which never appears to have been put down as long as Irene lived, and in 801 Kasim, Harún's son, again threatened Asia Minor. At home the only event of importance was a conspiracy in 797, having as its object the enthrone-

ment of one of the mutilated sons of Constantine VI., who were living in exile at Athens. It was discovered, the four miserable men who had lost their tongues were now blinded, and the whole five exiled to Panormus.

The most notable event of Irene's reign was the natural result of her usurpation. The West had for many years looked more and more to Karl the Great, who was now supreme from the North Sea to the Vulturnus, and from Barcelona to beyond the Elbe. On Christmas Day, A.D. 800, he was crowned Roman Emperor of the West by Pope Leo III. in St. Peter's Basilica at Rome. There is no need to discuss the legality of the act; it was a perfectly natural, probably a long contemplated, one; the Pope could allege with perfect truth that the legitimate Roman Emperor had been unjustly deposed, and that the rule of his blood-stained mother was a monstrous anomaly. Rightly or wrongly—and the writer can see no valid argument against it—the deed was done; the result of Irene's unnatural action was that any union between East and West was finally rendered hopeless.

In 802 the end came. Irene had alienated all classes; even the Iconodules had no feeling in her favour. Internally the administration of her creatures was wasteful and bad; the Slavs were in open revolt; the Empire was humiliated in East and West: the Empress cared not. Her treasurer Nicephorus, a descendant of the Arab Kings of Ghassan, gained over some of her eunuchs and attendants, seized her at night, and hurried her across to a convent on one of the Princes Islands

in the Propontis, which she had herself founded. Not a blow was struck for her, and Nicephorus was proclaimed Augustus without opposition. Irene was soon taken from her retreat to another convent in Lesbos, where she is said to have been deprived of the bare necessities of life, so that she was forced to earn a scanty subsistence by spinning. It may be so; it is impossible to feel any pity for her. She survived her fall only a few months.

The results of the labours of the great 'Isaurians,' which even the disasters under Irene had not materially affected, were that the Empire had been firmly welded together; that it had been thoroughly reorganized, and in a manner regenerated. The political decline under Irene does not imply decreasing material prosperity; on the contrary, there is every evidence that it was steadily on the increase. In Finlay's words: 'The true historical feature of this memorable period is the aspect of a declining empire saved by the moral vigour developed in society, and of the central authority struggling to restore national prosperity." This is no more than the truth; people and princes did their duty manfully and well, and their efforts secured for the State three centuries and more of prosperous life.

EASTERN EMPIRE A.D. 800.
Direct Rule
Indirect Rule or Influence
(Outlined thus).
WESTERN (FRANKISH) EMPIRE
AVARS
KHAZARIC EMPIRE
ALANIA
ALBANIA
ABASGIA
IBERIA
ARMENIA
ABBASID KHALIFATE
BAGHDAD
DAMASCUS
CYPRUS
CRETE
SARDINIA
SICILY
CALABRIA
DALMATIA
CROBATIA
SERVIA
BULGARIA
Danube
EUXINE
THRACE
THESSALONICA
CONSTANTINOPLE
OPTIMATON
BUCELLARION
ARMENIAKON
OPSIKION
THRAKESION
ANATOLIKON
AIGAION
Venice
Ravenna
Spalatro
Ragusa
Rome
Gaeta
Naples
Dyrrhachium
Otranto
Corcyra
Nicopolis
Leucas
Cephallenia
Zacynthus
Patras
Panormus
Messina
Rhegium
Catane
Syracuse
Larissa
Thessalonica
Lemnos
Lesbos
Chios
Athens
Corinth
Thebes
Samos
Ephesus
Smyrna
Sardes
Rhodes
Trnova
Presthlava
Varna
Mesembria
Anchialus
Philippopolis
Sardica
Adrianople
Arcadiopolis
Chalcedon
Nicomedia
Cyzicus
Nicaea
Prusa
Abydos
Pergamus
Acroinon
Amorium
Antioch
Iconium
Attalia
Kibyra
Tarsus
Tyana
Germanicia
Melitene
Caesarea
Sebastea
Amasea
Amisus
Sinope
Trapezus
Phasis
Cherson
Orster

CHAPTER XI

THE NAVAL AND MILITARY SYSTEMS

The army—The thematic system and its development—Organization, arms, equipment, and tactics — Quality — The navy, provincial and imperial—Classes of ships—General appearance, armament, and crews—Estimate of size, etc.—Strength of navy—Its decay.

THE main external feature of the history of the Eastern Empire is its long and, until the eleventh century (even to some extent afterwards), successful resistance to its encircling foes. Some notice of the military system which enabled it to do so can hardly be omitted.

The Roman army in A.D. 395 had entirely lost the semblance of what it had been in 200. It was a mass of heterogeneous mercenaries; the reason for this has been pointed out. We have also noticed that Leo I. began to replace the mercenaries by native troops, and that under the Dardanian Emperors foreigners and Romans were nearly equally divided. Justinian I., however, preferred to work with mercenaries; as they were only hired for short periods he found them cheaper. At the close of his reign the disorganization was complete, and under his successors a fresh organization

had to be carried out, which was in its turn swept away.

The main idea of imperial defence in the period 395—641 was that the line of the Danube was defended by one army, the Armenian frontier by another, and the Euphrates in Mesopotamia by a third, while reserves of native and foreign troops lay near the capital. None of these armies were territorial ; their strength varied ; it was kept up by levies from different parts of the Empire.

The disasters of the Late-Dardanian, Maurician, and Heracliad epochs brought about the beginnings of a scientific territorial system. Such a system had of course, to some extent, existed in the earlier Empire. The frontier legions were largely recruited in the districts in which they lay ; the recruits were, however, for the most part camp children or chance waifs who drifted into cantonments ; the populations of the provinces in the rear were debarred from bearing arms. But after 640 a complete change took place ; it had, indeed, been in progress for some time previously. The armies of the East (Syria) and of the Armenian border had now fallen backbehind the line of Taurus ; each was cantoned over a wide extent of country, which became its regular recruiting district. The same was done with the Imperial Guard, native (Obsequi) and foreign (Buccellarii), the fœderati (Optimati), and a division of the army of Thrace which had been sent across to Asia. The coast districts from Mysia to Cilicia became the Naval Theme. In Europe the armies of Illyricum and Thrace were distributed in the themes of Thrace, Thessalonica, and Hellas.

At first the themes varied greatly in size and strength. The Anatolikoi were by far the largest of the armies, and could practically give the law to the others. Leo III. perhaps, as Professor Bury suggests, made the system somewhat more symmetrical, but still the Anatolikoi were very strong. In the civil war of 740—742 Constantine VI. was supported by them and by the Thracesians only on land; he seems to have been outnumbered by two to one; but then Artavasdos controlled the Thracians, Optimati, Obsequi, Buccellarii, Armeniakoi, and a host of Amenian volunteers and raw levies. The Optimati probably in course of time disappeared, and their district either ceased to be a military department or was united to Opsikion or Bukellarion. During the ninth century considerable alterations were made, chiefly in the direction of decentralization; the danger of the large Anatolic and Armeniac armies being collected under one hand was obvious. In 863, when the whole force of Asia took the field against Omar of Melitene, we hear nothing of the Optimati; but five old themes, the Anatolikoi, Armeniakoi, Thracesians, Bukellarians, and Opsikians, were all present, and three new ones, the Paphlagonians, Koloneians, and Cappadocians, besides two 'Kleisourarchies' (frontier divisions), those of Seleucia and Charsiana. The European troops which co-operated in the campaign were the themes of Thrace and Macedonia. Fifty years later we find that Charsiana and Seleucia have become themes also. During the period 750—900 there were no territorial acquisitions of any importance; the conclusion is, roughly speaking, that each great

theme was divided into two or more smaller ones. Anatolikon, Armeniakon, and Bukellarion, were split into eight, and the border districts of Charsiana and Seleucia were enlarged and raised to the rank of themes. Two themes, Lykandos and Mesopotamia, were formed out of territory acquired in the reign of Leo VI. The Kibyrraiot Theme was divided into two, one of which retained its old name, while the other was named after its headquarter port of Samos. In Europe, Thrace was divided into Thrace and Macedonia ; Thessalonica into Thessalonica and Strymon ; while Hellas was split into Hellas, Nicopolis, and Peloponnesus. A new naval theme was also created in the Ægean. The great increase in the number of themes during the ninth and tenth centuries was the outcome of a calculated policy of decentralization ; it does not imply a corresponding increase in the number of troops, though doubtless there was a considerable augmentation as the Empire recovered strength and prosperity. As to the actual numbers, it is fairly certain that in the eighth century the five great Asiatic themes could put 80,000 men into the field for an invasion of Syria ; for defence, they could probably, by calling in garrisons and depots, muster more. It does not, however, appear that the armies which conquered Northern Syria, Bulgaria, and Armenia, ever exceeded 80,000 or 100,000 men. The 'Tactica' of Leo VI. affords tolerably good evidence that the army was completely territorialized ; each division had its regular district in which it was quartered and recruited.

The organization of the troops was by divisions

(turmai), brigades (drungoi), and single battalion regiments (bandoi) of three companies, still called 'centuries' as of old, though as a fact each was 160 strong. The infantry battalion, including officers, musicians, and colour-bearers, therefore probably totalled over 500 combatants; it included one company of heavy spearmen and two of archers and slingers. When in line, the heavy infantry (scutati) were in the centre, the archers on either flank; when charging, the scutati of course led the way, the archers following in second and third line, and, when the opposing forces closed, discharging volleys over the heads of the scutati.

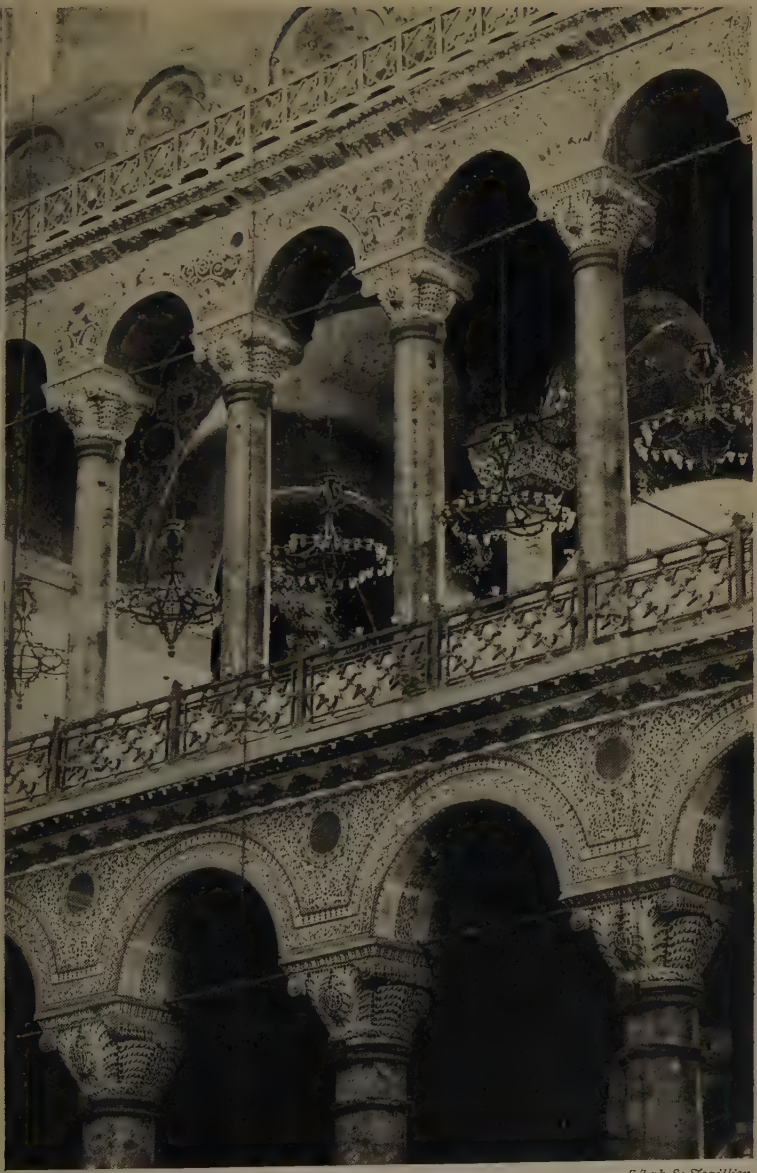
The cavalry was the premier arm of the service; the Empire had to contend all its days with mounted foes, with whose rapid marches and swift, far-reaching raids infantry would have been unable to cope. The cavalry regiment probably consisted of only two squadrons, each from 160 to 200 strong; its strength in the field was always much less, owing to the Byzantine practice of carefully weeding out all but the thoroughly fit and efficient horses and men, and thus avoiding heavy sick-lists; it may be set down at 250 troopers. The men were protected by coats of ring-mail worn over leather tunics, guards of plate on the arms, steel helmets and shields, and were armed with lance, sword, and bow; the presence of the latter weapon in the mounted arm is significant. The horses were also protected. Tactics were scientific and highly elaborated; the accepted principle was that the frontal advance should be always combined with a flank attack.

Each 'band' had a baggage train of 30 carts with 60 drivers and attendants, carrying in all 240 engineering tools, 60 baskets and sieves, 30 camp-kettles, and 30 hand-mills, besides rations for man and beast; and reserves of arrows, medical stores, and perhaps pieces of armour, to replace irreparable damages. The medical staff consisted of two surgeons and several attendants and bearers.

The engineers' department was scientifically organized and trained, and well equipped. Space is lacking wherein to describe it and its engines; but it may be said in brief that sieges presented no difficulty to the average East Roman army.

The divisions and brigades varied considerably in strength. This variation was the general rule; it was based on the principle of disabling an enemy from estimating the numbers of a Byzantine army until the actual day of contact; this principle was also followed by Napoleon. A division might contain from five to ten 'bands'; a theme, one, two, or three divisions of each of the two chief arms. A theme of two infantry and two cavalry divisions would probably put into the field about 16 weeded battalions and 40 squadrons, or, say, 6,000 infantry and 5,000 cavalry, with about 500 engineers, 2,000 non-combatants, 7,000 horses, and 900 vehicles. The number of the followers and carts is not excessive, as may be thought; an English battalion has 5 carts and 10 four-horse waggons, a Russian battalion 20 vehicles, and a European army corps appears to have one non-combatant for every four fighting men.

The cavalry troopers were mostly of the small-



Sébah & Joaillier.

GALLERIES OF SANCTA SOPHIA.

The marble shafts of the columns are mostly the spoil of Pagan temples. The capitals have not the impost which is so common in the Ravennese churches.

farmer class; the infantry, chiefly peasantry. During their term of service they were liable only to the land-tax. The officers belonged chiefly to the local gentry. The tastes and habits of the Byzantine aristocracy were distinctly military, and there was no difficulty in obtaining their services; there was also a large leaven of adventurers, chiefly of Armenian and Caucasian strain.

In quality the army was decidedly one of the best that the world has seen. In estimating its merits, we must never forget that its advantage in armament over its antagonists was very slight; it could not check a savage army by storms of bullets and shells, and then massacre it comfortably at a range of 400 yards. Its archery had to cope with similar forces in the ranks of its opponents; nor was the Byzantine bow the terrible weapon which England borrowed from Wales, and therewith defeated stubborn Scot and fiery Frank alike. The army of New Rome faced and foiled attacks like the Ghazi rushes of Ahmed Khel and Tamai, which British soldiers found it hard enough to break with rifle and cannon, with no better weapons than sword and spear, supplemented by bow and sling. It appears, like those of Greece and Rome, to have been somewhat liable to panic, but on the whole its steadiness was great.

In conclusion it ought to be pointed out that the thematic system was essentially defensive; with the advent of the epoch of aggression it began to decline; the armies of John I. and Basil II., constantly moving between Danube and Caucasus, and always on the frontier, had to be maintained at war strength

by special methods, and the old machinery fell into decay. With the decline in the free agricultural class, also, the practice of employing mercenaries, which had never quite died out, began to revive. Basil II. employed a large corps of Russians; the Foreign Imperial Guard became very important; under the Comnenoi probably two-thirds of the army were mercenary troops. Still, during the period 610 to 1025 the forces of the Empire were mostly composed of born subjects, and were as national as in a realm of many races they well could be.

The navy was yet more important than the army, but we have no such complete information concerning it. In 395 there was practically no fleet; the Mediterranean was a Roman lake. The Vandal settlement in Africa brought about a maritime revival; but after the conquest of the Vandals and Ostrogoths the Pax Romana on the sea precluded the necessity of maintaining a large navy,* and it was not until the seventh century that the Saracen naval efforts once more forced the Empire to look to its fleet. At first it consisted of provincial squadrons, but in the ninth century the Cretan trouble compelled the Emperors to organize a distinct imperial fleet, which could be employed independently of the provincial vessels, which were needed to police the coasts.

Warships were generically termed 'dromones' (fast-sailers); but as a fact there were two distinct classes, 'dromones' and 'pamphylians,' which may be conveniently differentiated as battleships and

* A navy of course always existed, and it was easy to expand it.

cruisers; there were, of course, small craft also. They were certainly not the low, light, lean galleys of the late Middle Ages of Europe, which were evolved in the Venetian lagoons, and were useless in rough weather. The classification of dromones as battleships and pamphylians as cruisers must not be carried to an extreme; the latter were built for speed, but were not necessarily unfit to lie in the line of battle. Flagships were usually specially-built and very large pamphylians.

The typical Byzantine dromon was a vessel of considerable size, probably larger than a Roman quinquereme; the fact that it had only two banks of oars implies merely that the builders of the Ægean had discovered the folly of piling tier upon tier, and had developed their craft in the direction of length and beam; and also relied more upon sail-power than oars, except for manœuvring. The crew totalled 300 men or thereabouts, of whom 70 were marines, the rest seamen and rowers, the former being certainly fighting men. The great naval victory over the Russians in 941 gives a clear impression of the Byzantine ships as vessels of considerable size and high freeboard; medieval galleys would have been easy to board even from boats. Amidships was a redoubt of heavy timber, loopholed for archery; and on the forecastle a turret, perhaps a revolving one, sheltering a Greek-fire cannon and its gunners. The poop was probably raised, and was the station of the officers. There were two masts, lateen-rigged, and perhaps thirty to forty oars a side. The second-class dromones had crews of about 200; the third, which seems to have included most of the

pamphylians, from 120 to 160. There were also very light and swift small craft—chelandia—employed in scouting and despatch-bearing.

The imperial navy in the tenth century consisted nominally of about 200 ships, about equally divided between dromones and pamphylians. In the Cretan expedition of 963 there were (apparently) at least 100 dromones and 200 pamphylians.

The decay of the navy in the eleventh and twelfth centuries was partly, no doubt, due to the disorganization of the Asiatic maritime provinces, partly to neglect consequent upon the driving of the Saracen flag from the sea, partly to financial difficulties. Still, in 1170 and 1172 Manuel I. put afloat fleets of 200 sail; the maritime resources of the Empire were still great, and naval decline must be attributed very much to indolent neglect under the Angeloi, and the sack of Constantinople, which broke the Empire up into various states, none of which was powerful enough to attempt to dispute the command of the sea with Venetians and Genoese. The vitally important part played in imperial history by the navy has been noticed.

CHAPTER XII

IRENE'S SUCCESSORS TO MICHAEL III.

Nicephorus I.—His character, reign, and misfortunes—Michael I.—Iconodulic reaction—Bulgarian war—Leo V.—His successful reign—Iconoclast reaction—Michael II.—Loss of Crete and Sicily—Theophilus—His character and reign—Michael III.—Regency of Theodora—Final Iconodulic reaction—Prosperity of the Empire—Bardas Cæsar—His reforms—Contest between Eastern and Western Churches—Victories over Saracens—Murder of Bardas—Basil I.—Murder of Michael III.

IT is probable that Irene's eunuchs supported Nicephorus for the reason that they expected to find in him a convenient tool. They were bitterly disappointed; he was a man of decided character, possessed of considerable ability and great force of will.

Nicephorus inherited the triple struggle which had been the portion of his Isaurian predecessors. The Saracens continually threatened the Asiatic provinces and Harún was still Khalif, as desirous as ever of the delights of rapine. In Europe an enemy who lacked the savage Khalif's thin veneer of culture, Krum of Bulgaria, menaced the Empire. Within, the strife between Iconoclasm and Iconoduly continued, and the administration,

owing to the wasteful policy of Irene, was in grave disorder.

In religious matters the new Emperor inaugurated a policy of toleration, which, naturally, did not make him popular with the Iconodules. As an administrator, the financier predominated in him, and he is said to have welcomed decisions against corrupt officials, for the opportunity thereby afforded of confiscating their property. He re-established the customs duties at the Hellespont, which had been remitted by Irene in order to purchase popularity; imposed a tax of two nomismata on the sale of slaves; and increased the stamp duty on documents. He made all monasteries liable to the hearth-tax; the measure was entirely justifiable, for religious houses escaped many obligations which fell upon the lay taxpayer. Worse still, in the eyes of the monastic chroniclers, he quartered troops in monasteries and permitted the sale of 'sacred' plate. As he had had experience in finance, it is probable that taxpayers found evasion of their burdens difficult. The most ill-advised of his financial acts was that he converted the entire non-native agricultural population into imperial serfs. It should be said that he expended the revenue freely in the public service, and cannot be accused of foolish parsimony.

Internally his rise led, naturally enough, to disturbances. Vardan, an Armenian general, revolted; but his troops deserted, and he was tonsured. In 808 a plot was formed to substitute Arshavir, another Armenian, for Nicephorus. It was discovered, Arshavir's estate was confiscated, and he

was tonsured. The Emperor scarcely erred on the side of cruelty.

Hostilities of a feeble sort dragged on with the new Western Empire during the greater part of the reign; they ended in 810 with a provisional treaty on the basis of the *status quo*. The Saracen war was far more troublesome. Nicephorus had repudiated Irene's shameful treaty, but acted rashly in doing so before reorganizing the army. In 804 the generals of Harún advanced across Taurus, and defeated Nicephorus at Krasos. In 806 Harún himself took the field, and captured Tyana and Heraclea-on-Taurus, while another army ravaged Anatolikon and stormed Ancyra. Nicephorus, hampered by the disorganization of the army and troubled with Bulgarian raids, sued for peace, which was only granted on the terms of a yearly tribute of 30,000 nomismata, with six great gold medals for himself and his son Stavrakios. The ruined fortresses were not to be restored. Harún, who also had troubles elsewhere, was probably glad to retire with honour. Nicephorus made no attempt to fulfil the conditions of the treaty, and next year Cyprus and Rhodes were wasted; but in 809 Harún died. The only result of the war was that the frontier regions on both sides of the border steadily deteriorated.

In Europe a revolt of the Slavs in Greece was put down by the almost unaided efforts of the Hellenes; but the Bulgarian invasion was to prove the ruin of Nicephorus. Krum was a mere barbarian in instincts, but a great warrior. He had gained great successes over the decrepit Avars, and in 809 turned his attention to the Empire. He

surprised a small Roman force near the Strymon, and then besieged Sardica. The fortress had a strong garrison of 6,000 men, but was taken and its defenders massacred. It was evident that the erstwhile predatory Bulgars could now undertake regular sieges.

In 810 Nicephorus advanced to recover Sardica, but the troops, discontented and demoralized, mutinied, and the campaign was a complete fiasco. Nicephorus replaced the mutineers by new levies, raised funds by imposing a heavy tax on monasteries and by levying an increased retrospective land-tax on large proprietors, and again took the field in 811. He pushed rapidly forward to Markellon, defeated the Bulgarians, and captured one of Krum's villas, with considerable treasure. Krum sued for peace, but Nicephorus demanded complete submission, to which the Bulgarian warrior-king naturally refused to consent. The army lay in careless order, apparently thrown off its guard by the negotiations. There was treachery in the camp; more than one imperial officer had deserted during the war; treachery alone, even if we admit considerable laxity of discipline, can fully account for what followed.

On July 25 Krum made a great night-assault. The army was taken by surprise; the Bulgarians swarmed through the camp, massacring the bewildered troops almost without resistance. Nicephorus and many great officers were slain; Stavrakios was desperately wounded. The story of a Bulgarian circumvallation is obviously fabulous; a large part of the army, with Stephen, General of the Guard, and Theoktistos, Count of the Palace,

escaped down the valley of the Hebrus to Adrianople. As it brought the wounded Emperor Stavrakios safely out of the panic and carnage, it is probable that part of it retained its organization, but it left behind it many thousands of dead and captives, and all its supplies and baggage.

Stavrakios was proclaimed sole Emperor at Adrianople, and the army was ready to stand by him; but his hurts were clearly mortal, and the question of a successor was urgent. Michael Rhangabé, a Greek noble, who had married Procopia, the daughter of Nicephorus, claimed the crown in right of his wife, and was supported by the Iconodules and by most of the malcontents. A Greek, he was naturally an Iconodule, and took an oath that he would put no one of orthodox principles to death, and would faithfully defend Church and clergy. Stavrakios retired into a monastery, and shortly afterwards died.

Michael entirely reversed the policy of Nicephorus. He persecuted the Paulician heretics of Asia so fiercely that they began to form independent frontier republics. He wasted immense sums on the clergy, though, perhaps by his wife's advice, much was also done for charity and for the families of the slain of Markellon. The Emperor was probably the most insignificant ruler who had ever occupied the throne, and when no effort was made to check Krum's ravages, discontent spread fast.

In 812 Krum took Debeltos, Anchialus, and other places. He made overtures for peace, but one of his conditions was that all deserters should be delivered up to his vengeance, and to this Michael's counsellors stoutly refused to agree; they

declared that never should the Empire so disgrace itself. Krum took Mesembria in November, and early next year advanced on Constantinople, but was forced to withdraw by an outbreak of plague. The weak Emperor showed his gratitude for the intercession of the saints by covering the tomb of the Patriarch Tarasius with silver, and became more than ever an object of contempt to the troops.

In May Krum again advanced. Michael joined the army at Adrianople, and, after much hesitation, risked a battle at Versinicia, in which he was totally defeated. The European troops on the left were almost exterminated, but the Asiatic divisions held out desperately, and finally retreated, covered by the Anatolikoi under Leo the Armenian. The Emperor fled to Constantinople, while the beaten army rallied at Adrianople, proclaimed Leo the Armenian Emperor, and followed to dethrone Michael. There was no opposition; Michael was tonsured; his sons, Theophylaktos and Ignatius, emasculated, and likewise forced into monasteries; and Leo crowned in Hagia Sophia on July 11, 813. Michael survived his deposition for thirty-two years.

Leo was an Armenian noble of the Arzunian clan. His elevation, though mainly due to his military ability, was also a sign of the great Armenian influence in the Empire. He had several children, the eldest of whom, Sembat, was proclaimed his father's colleague under the name of Constantine. Michael of Amorium, a friend of Leo, who had commanded on the right in the recent disastrous battle, was created a patrician; Thomas

the Slav, another distinguished officer, appointed general of the Optimati; Manuel the Mamigonian, an Armenian, was placed in command of the Armeniakoi.

On July 17, six days after Leo's coronation, the Bulgarian host—30,000 of them cased in iron—arrived before the walls of Constantinople. Leo resorted to the shameful device of endeavouring to assassinate Krum at a personal interview by means of an ambush. Krum was forced to fly for his life, while his attendants were killed or taken. He revenged himself by plunder and massacre, storming Selymbria, Rhedestos, and Apri. Perinthus alone held out; finally Adrianople, which had been left to itself when the army marched for Constantinople, was starved into surrender and plundered. Leo's cowardly treachery had had terrible results; the consequences could not have been worse had the foul attempt on Krum's life never been made.

Leo remained in Constantinople during the winter, adding to the fortifications and energetically reorganizing the army, for Krum had resolved to make an effort to besiege the capital. A Bulgarian army raided Thrace during the winter and captured Arcadiopolis. Leo dared not attack it, and it went home in triumph with a great booty.

Krum meanwhile had died, very fortunately for the Empire; he was perhaps the most formidable adversary that it had seen since Gaiseric. Leo had at last put together an army able to take the field, and in the spring of 814 he marched to Mesembria. The Bulgarians, confident of success, advanced against him; but Leo attacked them in their camp,

and after a furious struggle gained a bloody and complete victory. The Bulgarian host is said to have been annihilated; certainly its loss was enormous. The fabric of Bulgarian greatness fell at a single blow; Leo's victorious troops, with five years of defeat to avenge, wasted the whole country with ruthless barbarity. The Bulgarians could not retaliate, and King Giom Omortag was glad to conclude peace for thirty years.

The disorders in the Abbasid Khalifate left the eastern frontier at peace, and in the West, after some piratical skirmishing, the Aglabites of Kairwan made a ten years' truce with the Empire. Leo was then able to devote his attention to internal affairs. He would seem to have modelled himself consciously upon Leo III. He reorganized the army, and re-established the military frontier against Bulgaria. Administrative corruption and disorder were repressed with a stern hand. Leo's justice as the final judge of appeal was universally acknowledged. His religious tendencies were Iconoclastic, but he endeavoured at first to follow a policy of toleration, and it was only when the Patriarch Nicephorus publicly anathematized Antonios of Syllæum, the leader of the Iconoclast Church party, and the troops began to retaliate by defacing images, that the Emperor deposed him, and substituted Theodotos Melissenos, a strong Iconoclast. The chief Iconodules were removed from office; the most prominent, Theodore of Studium, was banished; otherwise there were no punitive measures: persecution there was none.

Leo's reign was on the whole one of considerable

prosperity, but he was not destined to die in peace. Michael of Amorium, actuated solely, as it would seem, by selfish ambition, plotted to make himself Emperor. He was imprisoned and sentenced to death ; but his associates, still at liberty, made their way into the Emperor's private chapel on the morning of Christmas Day, 820, disguised as choristers, and murdered him on the very steps of the altar. They rushed to the dungeons, released Michael, and proclaimed him Emperor without waiting to remove his fetters. Leo's sons were seized and emasculated, his wife forced to take the veil, and the hapless family, bereaved and mutilated, sent across to the Princes' Islands, with the dismembered remains of the murdered Emperor lying among them in a sack.

Michael of Amorium was not worthy of comparison with the man whom he had so violently succeeded. He was a good soldier, but otherwise possessed of no great ability, cruel and overbearing, something of a braggart also—a sort of crowned Augereau. He was an elderly widower, with a son in the prime of manhood. He crowned this son, Theophilus, his colleague, and contracted a second marriage with the Princess Euphrosyne, daughter of Constantine VII. She had already taken the veil, but the Patriarch absolved her from her vows, though the marriage was probably only nominal.

Michael's accession was the signal for a fierce and prolonged civil war. Thomas the Slav took arms to seize the throne, and enlisted in his cause all Asia Minor except Armeniakon and Opsikion. He made a treaty with the Khalif Mamún, and was

crowned Emperor by Job, Patriarch of Antioch; but he committed a grave error in enlisting bodies of Mohammedan mercenaries, thus giving his enterprise an anti-national character. In 821 he besieged Constantinople, which was stoutly defended by Michael and Theophilus, while the Armeniacs and Opsikians were in force at Chalcedon, and prevented the formation of a complete blockade. Two attempts to storm were frustrated, and in 822 Michael's fleet defeated that of Thomas, and cut him off from Asia. Thomas was defeated by an army of Bulgarians, which had seized the opportunity to make a raid on Thrace, and thereupon Michael made a sortie, broke up the siege, and blockaded Thomas in Arcadiopolis. After a siege of five months the place fell, and Thomas and his son were taken and executed, under circumstances of hideous cruelty, their limbs being amputated previous to hanging.

This unfortunate civil struggle, which lasted for nearly three years, was productive of much misery and destruction of property within the Empire, and was the cause of a grave disaster without. In 823 an army of pirates from Egypt landed in Crete, and occupied it with little difficulty. The people were apathetic; at least one district made a favourable treaty with the corsairs, who established themselves in a gigantic fortress near Knossos, which they called Khandak. For nearly a century and a half the island became a hotbed of pirates. We shall have occasion to see the misery which this robber community was able to inflict. Michael made two attempts to recover Crete, but both were completely defeated. A third attempt was successful in clearing

the seas of the pirate squadrons; but Khandak was not taken, and Crete remained Mohammedan.

Next, in 827, Ziadet-Allah of Kairwan, invited by Euphemios, a Syracusan rebel who had been threatened with mutilation for the rape of a nun, invaded Sicily. The Byzantine troops were beaten at Mazara, and Agrigentum fell. Syracuse was next besieged, but the plague decimated the Saracens, and they were driven westward by reinforcements from Constantinople. The tide of success ebbed and flowed, but the Saracens, supported by swarms of adventurers from Egypt and Africa, slowly gained ground, and the troubles of the reign of Theophilus prevented the Roman government from sending reinforcements.

Michael's general conception of his sovereignty appears to have been that it afforded him a good opportunity for taking his ease. He certainly neglected imperial affairs in the West; we have seen that he failed to recover Crete, a feat which at this time was not very difficult; internally he appears to have followed a listless policy of *laissez-faire*. He temporized with Iconoclasts and Iconodules, and recalled Theodore of the Studium from banishment, but he was probably an Iconclast at heart; his son Theophilus was decidedly one. Michael obtained very qualified support from the orthodox party. He died in October, 829. It was fifty years since a Roman sovereign had died peacefully in possession of authority. Theophilus succeeded quietly to the undivided exercise of the supreme power.

Theophilus was a curious figure. He was a man

of decided character, a strong and even bigoted Iconoclast of the type of Constantine VI. He had received an excellent education from the great scholar John the Grammarian; he was a gallant warrior and a conscientious administrator, but vain and ostentatious, somewhat petty and mean in his instincts, and cursed with a suspicious and discontented temperament, which led him into the commission of more than one deed of cruelty.

His first act was to execute the murderers of Leo V. He seems to have been actuated by a superstitious dread of the vengeance of Heaven; but seeing that he directly benefited by the deed, and that the murderers had been pardoned by his father, the justice of his action was very problematical. He devoted much attention to improving the administration of justice, but his measures were so arbitrary and harsh that his interference probably did as much harm as good, though the excellence of his intention was never questioned. His notions of justice were Oriental, and in other matters, to quote Finlay, 'the minute attention which Theophilus gave to performing the duties of a prefect indicates that he was deficient in the grasp of intellect required for the clear perception of the duties of an Emperor.'

Theophilus was a widower at his accession, and, as he was sonless, it was important that he should marry again. His stepmother Euphrosyne helped him by giving a grand reception to as many of the beauties of the Empire as could be assembled, and in the midst of the festivities the Emperor entered to choose his bride, with a golden apple in his hand

—a queer bit of rather childish posing. As he came down the line of courtesying maidens, he saw the poetess Kasia, and stopped by her, but for some reason could find nothing better to say than that woman was the source of all evil. 'Yes, sire,' came the swift reply, 'but she is the source of all the good also!' Kasia, scholar and poetess, was not to be crowed down by a mere crowned head, but the small-minded monarch's vanity was stung by the retort, and he turned away in irritation. Then he saw Theodora, the daughter of the Drungarius Marinus, standing with dropped eyelids, and gave her the fateful toy without a word. Dr. Bussell very rightly points out that Theodora was a scion of the great Romanized Armenian house of the Mamigonians, leading us to the conclusion that the selection had been arranged; but against this it must be remembered that none but girls of high station would be present, and that Euphrosyne and Theophilus would hardly have deliberately insulted Kasia by a prearranged repulse. Probably the affair was genuine enough. One strong argument in favour of this theory is that Theodora was a devoted Iconodule, whom Theophilus would hardly have chosen had he known of her convictions.

In 832 Theophilus issued an Iconoclastic edict, prohibiting every display of image-worship, and forbidding the use of the word 'holy' before the name of a saint. The edict was enforced with considerable severity; Theophilus rarely or never inflicted the death penalty, but there was a great recrudescence of torture, and many Iconodules were scourged, mutilated, or branded. Theophilus was

inconsistent in his proceedings, however; his young wife procured the pardon of several prominent Iconodules, and he would not ill-treat her, though probably her influence did much to encourage the opposition. He strengthened himself by procuring the election of his tutor, John the Grammarian, as Patriarch; the latter, however, was a man of moderation, and no increased intensity of persecution followed.

By this time the Khalifate was visibly breaking up, though still retaining some show of strength under the enlightened Khalif Mamún. Mamún's reign was distracted by civil wars and revolts, especially in Persia, where a great rising took place under Babek. The result was an immigration into the Empire, chiefly of Persarmenian Christians, whose number was so large that a corps of 30,000 troops was organized from them. Their chief was a great noble, who claimed descent from the Achæmenids. He was known among the East Romans by the name of Theophobos, and received in marriage the hand of the Emperor's sister Helena.

The protection granted by Theophilus to these refugees caused a renewal of the dormant war. A Saracen army under Abu-Chazar invaded the Empire in 831, and gained a considerable victory over Theophilus in person. Next year, however, the fortune of war changed, and the Saracen forces which entered the Empire were met by Theophilus in Charsiana and completely defeated. In 833 Mamún himself appeared in the West and ravaged Cappadocia, but died in the same year.

Renewal of Saracen War

The first ill-successes of Theophilus had roused his bad instincts, and he acted towards his generals with such suspicious harshness that one of the most distinguished, Manuel, fled to the Khalif. A splendid embassy, under John the Grammarian, was sent to Baghdad, immediately after the death of Mamún, with the object of concluding peace with Mutasim, now Khalif. John had orders, very ill-advised, but which he duly carried out, to make an ostentatious display of the wealth of the Empire. He failed to achieve the main purpose of the embassage, but succeeded in inducing Manuel to return.

About this time Cherson was formally annexed, and a fortress, named Sarkel, built on the Don to protect the great trade route eastward. The amount of territorial gain is uncertain. The Imperial general was Petronas, brother of Theodora.

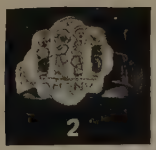
Irritated by the failure of his overtures to Mutasim, Theophilus crossed Taurus in 836 and ravaged Melitene. A Saracen army was defeated with great loss, and he marched unopposed to Samosata, which was taken and destroyed. Among the towns sacked was Sozopetra, a place for which Mutasim appears to have had peculiar affection: he is said to have made a special appeal to Theophilus to spare it. The expedition appears to have been characterized by much wanton cruelty, and Mutasim swore a solemn oath that he would destroy in return the home of Theophilus.

Meanwhile the war in Sicily dragged on. The Saracens were continually reinforced by desperadoes from Barbary and troops sent by the Aglabite monarchs; while Theophilus on his side supported

his generals with energy, thereby, however, seriously weakening his forces in Asia Minor.

By 837 Mutasim had quieted Persia, and was ready to begin the fulfilment of his oath; in 838 he invaded the Empire in two columns. The main attack was directed from Tarsus straight on Amorium, and was led by Mutasim in person. The subsidiary one was commanded by Afshín, the best of Mutasim's captains; it consisted of 30,000 Persians and Arabs, 10,000 Turks, and the whole levy of Armenia under its Christian governor Sembat. Its mission was to invade Cappadocia and distract Theophilus, while the main host—130,000 men, every one with 'Amorium' painted upon his shield—marched forth from the gates of Tarsus to fulfil the vow of Mutasim.

Theophilus was clearly very weak in proportion. The army was probably much reduced by drafts to Sicily; perhaps it had never been reorganized after the disorders of Michael's accession; it certainly had no trust in the Emperor, who on his side was without confidence in his officers. Theophilus seems at first to have taken up a defensive position in the Cilician passes, but Afshín's advance turned his flank, and leaving only Aetios, the general of the Anatolikoi, to observe Mutasim, he hastened to throw himself upon his general. A great battle was fought at Dasymon, and Theophilus was completely defeated. He displayed plenty of useless personal bravery, and was finally escorted off the field by Theophobos and his Persarmenians, while Manuel atoned for his temporary lapse from loyalty by dying at the head of the rearguard. Theophilus



BYZANTINE ORNAMENTS.

From the British Museum.

1. Gold bracelet with openwork hoop and bust of the Virgin in medallion. 2. Gold marriage ring with ornament in niello, about tenth century. 3. Gold betrothal ring with figures of the bride and bridegroom, and Christ and the Virgin, *circa* eleventh century. 4. Bronze gilt brooch, fourth century. 5. Bronze lamp, fifth century.

rallied his broken troops only at Amasea, whence he retreated to Dorylæum.

Meanwhile the Khalif's vanguard, under his Turkish general Ashnas, forced the Cilician passes; his main body, defiling safely under its cover, came through and concentrated on Tyana; and Aetios, outnumbered by at least five to one, could make no stand. He called in every available man, and retreated steadily upon Amorium. From Tyana to Amorium is more than 200 miles, but Aetios outmanœuvred the overwhelming army which was in pursuit, and reached the doomed city in safety. He sent on such regiments as he could spare to reinforce the Emperor, and threw himself into Amorium with his best troops, resolved to defend it to the last extremity. Ravaging Lycaonia and Cappadocia with the usual barbarity, the Saracens came on to besiege Amorium. A furious assault was instantly made and gallantly repulsed. Theophilus made overtures for peace; the Bishop of Amorium offered to ransom the city, but Mutasim was deaf; he wanted only vengeance, and renewed his assaults again and again, every attempt being repelled with terrible loss. For nearly two months Amorium held out desperately, but famine told steadily upon the gallant defenders, and the end was certain; Theophilus could not, or dared not, advance to the relief. Treachery did what the Khalif's hosts could not achieve; a scoundrel named Voiditzes (presumably a Slav, but perhaps an Armenian) betrayed his trust; the Saracens poured in by the gate he opened, and Amorium was Mutasim's, after a splendid defence of fifty-five days. The remnants of the garrison were massacred, and

Mutasim proceeded to fulfil his vow by a foul and calculated butchery of the inhabitants. As far as possible the place was destroyed; 30,000 inhabitants are said to have perished; Mutasim bought his not very glorious success at the price of 70,000 men. Aetios and forty-two officers were taken, kept as prisoners for seven years, and finally murdered by Vathek, the son and successor of Mutasim.

Gibbon very justly says that Mutasim had sacrificed the lives of 70,000 subjects to a point of honour. He made no attempt to utilize his success, but retired, retaining no foot of ground after such tremendous exertions. He refused to make peace unless Manuel (now dead) and a Persian refugee named Nasar were surrendered; Theophilus would not disgrace himself, and the war dragged on. Nasar was killed in action by the Emir Abu-Saïd, but the latter was soon after defeated and killed; Melitene was wasted, and Seleucia, the port of Antioch, sacked by a naval expedition. Theophilus, however, since Amorium, had ceased to direct affairs with vigour; he strove to dissipate his growing melancholy by indulging in splendid and useless building operations. His health was declining, and he appointed Theodora regent for his little son Michael, with her uncle Manuel, her brother Bardas, and Theoktistos, the Postmaster-General, as her assistants. He excluded his gallant brother-in-law, Theophobos, and just before his death gave way to his suspicions and caused him to be murdered. As he looked upon the dead face of the man who had served him faithfully, his better feelings overcame him. 'Thou art gone, Fear-of-God,' he said mourn-

fully, 'but I am Dear-to-God no more,' and, turning away his face, died. As he breathed his last, Theodora laid one of the eikons that he detested on his breast, so that he should die orthodox, and not lack the prayers of the Church. It was a superstitious act, but none the less one of pure womanly charity, and deserves record (January 20, 842).

When Michael III. was proclaimed in the Hippodrome, the people called for the coronation also of Manuel, who was highly popular; but he had no intention of wronging his great-nephew, and steadily refused. Loyalty was perhaps stronger in him than religious feeling. He had hitherto had the name of a strong Iconoclast, but now supported his niece's Iconodulic policy. An ecclesiastical revolution was effected, and on September 19 the proscribed pictures were restored to the churches. John the Grammarian was deposed and blinded. Theodora secured the prayers of the Church for Theophilus by flatly informing the Iconodulic ecclesiastics that, if they would not grant them, she would support Iconoclasm! On the whole the change was well timed; the number of convinced Iconoclasts was not large; the movement had done good work in raising the moral tone of society; men were now desirous of peace.

A Slavonic revolt in Peloponnesus was put down without trouble; but Theoktistos, ambitious of military renown, failed in expeditions to Colchis and Crete. In Sicily, the loss of Messina in 842 was a fatal blow to the imperial power. It seems also that Sardinia was occupied by corsairs about this time;

its connection with the Empire had always been loose. Theoktistos, endeavouring to retrieve his reputation, was completely defeated at the Mauropotamos among the foot-hills of Taurus, but a great Saracen armament was destroyed by storms off the Lycian coast. In 845 the cruel debauchee Vathek put to death the gallant general Aetios and his companions. They were regarded as martyrs.

The Paulician communities were now driven by persecution into open revolt. Their chief, Karbeas, established himself at Tephriké, in Lesser Armenia, and joined the dangerous Omár, Emir of Malatia, in his raids. Omár was checked by the vigour of Petronas, brother of Theodora, general of Thrakesion; Alim, Emir of Tarsus, was defeated, and in 852 a naval expedition sacked Damietta, and held the ruins of Alexandria for a year; but the Paulicians long remained troublesome.

In 855 dissensions in the regency ended in the murder of Theoktistos by Bardas, who now became practically supreme, though Theodora did not retire until 857. She is accused of neglecting her son, but it is difficult to say whether the charge is entirely justified; and Bardas may not have been entirely to blame for his nephew's dissolute habits, though he was as debauched and unprincipled as able and active. Theodora's administration had been on the whole successful; the finances had been thoroughly reorganized by Theoktistos, and the treasury contained a reserve of 130,000 pounds of gold and over 300,000 of silver (about £7,000,000). The measures of Bardas were on the whole well conceived and carried out; they embraced every department of

State. He gave special attention to the administration of the law, and began the task of drawing up a revised code. He protected learning, and refounded the University of Constantinople, placing at its head the great scholar Leo the Mathematician. He did much for the army, and effected such a revolution in its tactics that the author of the military manual Περὶ Παραδρόμης Πολέμου of the next century speaks of him in the highest terms. His system appears to have been to work the cavalry independently of infantry against the Saracen raids of mounted men; it was decidedly successful in protecting Asia Minor.

At home, however, the Court was a scene of constant scandal. Bardas was accused of every vice; the young Emperor was already on the high-road to dipsomania. The Patriarch Ignatius made no secret of his disgust. When Bardas ousted Theodora, he attempted to force her to take the veil; but Ignatius refused to aid the design, and finally declined point-blank to administer the Sacrament to the dissolute regent. Thereupon Bardas, taking advantage of the enmity which his somewhat excessive zeal had excited, deposed him, substituting in his place Photius, the first Secretary of State, a man of great ability and wide culture, connected also with the imperial family. He was probably coerced into accepting office, but, once established, showed himself no pliant instrument. Ignatius appealed to the bold and vigorous Pope Nicholas I., and for many years a bitter controversial struggle was waged between successive Popes and Photius. There were other points at issue beside the hasty

deposition of Ignatius; and in general it may be said that the effect of the struggle was to widen the breach between East and West.

During the greater part of this period Omár of Malatia was active on the Asiatic frontier. In 856, Leo, the imperial general, took the offensive, crossed the Euphrates, and advanced to Amida. The Saracens retaliated by several raids; Michael failed to check them by besieging Samosata in their rear, and in 860 he was badly defeated by Omár at Dasymon. In the same year Constantinople was scared by a sudden raid of Russians. A strong state had been built up by Scandinavian chiefs upon the Slav communities in the Great Eastern Plain, and the commercial towns of Novgorod on Lake Ilmen, and Kiev. Askold and Dir, the rulers of Kiev, came down the Dnieper with a flotilla of about 200 boats, containing perhaps 7,000 savage warriors, and horrified the Constantinopolitans by running past the capital, landing in Thrace, and ravaging the neighbourhood with hideous barbarity. Michael, who had left Constantinople to oppose a Cretan raid, hastily returned, and defeated them, but the daring nature of the attempt and the barbarity displayed had created a panic in the capital.

In 861 Michael conducted an expedition against Bulgaria. It was successful; King Boris embraced Christianity, but in return Michael retroceded the debatable Zagora, which had changed hands so often since the days of Justinian II. Bulgaria now became rapidly Christianized, and gave no trouble for over thirty years.

European affairs satisfactorily arranged, it was

resolved to deal finally with Omár of Malatia. In 865 Omár collected an army 40,000 strong, ravaged the Armeniac Theme, and sacked Amisus. The Thracian and Macedonian Themes were sent to Asia, and the command-in-chief committed to the capable Petronas. His strategy was admirable. Omár, laden with prisoners and booty, was retreating from Amisus, pursued by the Bukellarian, Armeniac, Paphlagonian, and Koloneian Themes under General Nasar, when he found his path barred by the Anatolikoi, Opsikians, and Cappadocians. They took up a position and repulsed him, while Petronas, with the Thrakesians and Europeans, was nearing his right flank. Omár retreated apparently to the north-east, but was intercepted by Nasar and again defeated. His one hope now was to find a gap in the circle of foes, but before he could do so Petronas came upon him near Abysianos in Pontus. He was once more defeated, and fled eastward, with the three armies in hot pursuit, only to find himself brought to a stand by an impassable mountain spur, while behind him the circle was completely closed. Harassed and exhausted, the Saracens turned to bay; Petronas ordered a general advance; the ten themes closed in on every side, and literally swept their opponents from the face of the earth. Omár fell; hardly a man escaped; and when the news of the catastrophe reached Baghdad, the population broke out into alarming riots.

Bardas was losing favour with Michael. The Emperor was now a confirmed dipsomaniac, and Bardas, created Cæsar in 862, joined less and less in

his nephew's orgies. He quite possibly hoped to eventually become Emperor, and Michael, who when sober was devoid neither of energy nor ability, grew suspicious. He confided his suspicions to his Grand Chamberlain, Basil, a man of half-Armenian, half-Macedonian descent, who had won his favour in the first instance by his personal strength and skill in horse-breaking. Basil was a man of great natural ability, and endeared himself to the wretched Emperor by repeatedly drinking him under the table at the Court debauches. Feats of this kind inspired Michael with great admiration, and he gave Basil all his confidence. After some hesitation he directed him, with the Postmaster-General Sembat, to make away with Bardas, who was murdered at Michael's feet, April, 866. On May 26 Basil was proclaimed Emperor and colleague of Michael.

Sembat had expected the dead man's title of Cæsar, and his disappointment found vent in revolt, in which he was aided by Peganes, Count of Opsikion. The revolt was easily put down, and its leaders blinded.

Basil took his new position very seriously; Michael found that he had deprived himself of his pleasant boon companion, and grew discontented with him. Amongst his crazy acts at this time was the exhumation and burning of the bodies of Constantine VI. and John the Grammarian. He now became liable to delirium tremens. Next he created a boon companion, named Basiliskian, Emperor, evidently as a rival to the reformed Basil. The latter's days were clearly numbered, but he resolved to anticipate his fate. He called together his

PLATE XX

THE CHOICE OF THEOPHILUS.

From the painting by Val Prinsep, R.A.

Theodora hesitatingly takes the golden apple from the Emperor amid the surprise of her companions. The Empress-Mother Euphrosyne comes forward to see her stepson's choice. The proud beauty at Theodora's right is evidently Kasia. Note the motley character of the Emperor's suite, including Scandinavian guards with the eagle plumes of Odin.

relatives and friends, and after an orgy in the Anthemian Palace, near Chalcedon, Michael was murdered under peculiarly piteous circumstances. Whatever may be thought of Basil's conduct, he had practically no choice except to slay or be slain. Michael was twenty-nine years of age at the time of his death, though he probably would not have lived much longer; he was already a physical and mental wreck. His mother, who was in the Anthemian Palace at the time of her son's murder, was permitted to give his remains imperial obsequies; she died a few months later, perhaps partly from horror and remorse for her own neglect. Basil, without, as appears, the slightest opposition, became sole Emperor.

CHAPTER XIII

THE EARLY MACEDONIANS

Basil I.—His character—Administration and legislation—Recovery of Southern Italy—Leo VI.—His uncertain origin—Weak administration—Saracen ravages—Alexander—Constantine Porphyrogenitos—Romanus Lecapenos—Bulgarian war—Successes in East—General wealth and prosperity—Decline in agricultural population—Constantine VIII. as littérateur—Romanus II.—Recovery of Crete and successes in Syria.

BASIL the Macedonian was a man of humble origin, who had commenced life by tramping to the capital to seek employment. On one side at least he was of Armenian descent. The means by which he gained the crown were soon forgotten—if, indeed, they were ever generally known—and he quickly won respect by his good intentions, industry, and ability. He began by partially confiscating the reckless grants made by Michael III. to favourites, and, having thus replenished the treasury, set himself to organize the finances as they had never yet been organized, in the interests of the taxpayers; a man of the people himself, he perfectly understood their sufferings and feelings, and his new regulations appear to have been thoroughly judicious. In legal matters he was

perhaps less successful by reason of inexperience, and he appears to have caused confusion by hurrying forward the publication of the new manual, the 'Procheiron.' He conciliated the stricter clergy by reinstating Ignatius in the patriarchate. The act was ratified by a Church Council held in 869-70; but Basil refused to make further concessions to the Roman Papacy.

Under the Amorians Dalmatia had been left almost to itself. At the outset of his reign an embassy from the Dalmatian Slavs reached Basil, praying for help against Saracen pirates, and a fleet of 100 ships, under Niketas Oryphas, sailed for the Adriatic. Ragusa, which had been blockaded for many months, was relieved, and the Slavonic tribes became formally subject to the Empire. With great good sense, Basil made no attempt to interfere with their local customs. He pursued the same wise policy with the Slavs of the Balkan Peninsula. The chiefs had hitherto bought their posts; Basil permitted free election.

In 871, Basil, with some trepidation probably—for he was untried in war—took command against the Paulicians of Tephrike, now under the active lead of Chrysochir, son of Karbeas. His first attack failed, and he owed his life to the exertions of an officer, Theophylaktos, called 'The Unbearable,' perhaps from his bad temper. He turned his attention to Italy, where Saracen pirates, beginning in 842 as allies of a claimant to the duchy of Beneventum, were active and dangerous. In 870, Ludwig II., the capable Karolingian Emperor, besieged Bari, their chief centre, and was assisted by Niketas

Oryphas; but the admiral soon quarrelled with Ludwig and withdrew. In 871 the Emperor captured the city, but was soon involved in troubles in Italy, and at his death in 875 the disorder appeared worse than ever.

In 874 Basil proceeded to the East. He took Samosata and Sozopetra, wasted Melitene, and gained an incomplete victory over the Emir; but then returned to Constantinople, leaving a force under the general Christophoros to watch the Paulicians. Christophoros defeated and slew Chrysochir at Agriane, took Tephrike, and destroyed the Paulician community. Many of the Paulicians enlisted in the imperial army for service in Italy.

Thither, in 876, a large expedition was sent. Bari was occupied, and in the course of the next four years the greater part of the present provinces of Apulia, Basilicata, and Calabria, was gradually conquered, the general Nicephorus Phokas greatly distinguishing himself. Beneventum was occupied, but this conquest was transitory; the new 'Theme of Longobardia' was held for nearly two centuries. Success in Italy was to some extent offset by disaster in Sicily, where the Saracens, in 878, captured Syracuse, after a splendid defence by John the Patrician. The Empire now held only Tauromenium and Catane in Sicily, with a few forts on Mount Etna.

In 876 the imperial army took Lulu, an important fortress on the slope of Cilician Taurus. Next year Basil took command, but only wasted Cilicia and Commagene. His general, Andreas the Slav, defeated a Saracen army on the Podandos, but in

PLATE XXI

the following year his successor, Stypiotes, was routed near Tarsus. In 880 Basil again took command, but could not take Germanicia, and accomplished nothing of importance. This was his last appearance in the field.

In 881 a Saracen raid on Eubœa was beaten off by the general Oiniates, and the Emir of Tarsus slain; and a Cretan expedition into the Propontis was defeated by Niketas Oryphas. The corsairs next raided the western coast of Greece, but Oryphas hauled his lighter vessels across the Isthmus of Corinth, and, picking up such ships as were available in the west, caught the pirate fleet off its guard and completely defeated it. The prisoners, many of whom were renegades, were executed with torture; doubtless the provocation had been great. The raid had evidently been concerted with the African Saracens, for shortly after a fleet from Tunis, including sixty immense ships, appeared in the Ionian Sea. It ravaged Cephallenia and Zacynthus, while Nasar, the imperial admiral, was detained by a general desertion of his rowers. They were replaced by a hasty levy of Peloponnesians, and Nasar then attacked the Moslems, and gained a complete victory. He drove the relics of the fleet into the African ports, landed in Sicily, and wasted the neighbourhood of Palermo. The price of olive-oil fell to almost nothing; the victorious ships came home laden with it.

In 884 the first edition of the 'Basilika' appeared. It was not an epoch-making piece of legislation, simply a collection of all the laws in force, more or less based upon the Code of Justinian—in some

respects a conscious throw-back to it. The Iconoclast legislation is of course violently criticized, but Finlay remarks that the orthodox codifiers were glad enough to avail themselves of its help. An important feature is that the tenant farmers are once more chained to the soil; the democratic epoch of the Iconoclasts has passed; for the next two centuries the dominant class is a warlike nobility, steadily encroaching upon the small cultivators. The results of this aristocratic revival were eventually disastrous. The imperial armies had been recruited from the hardy peasant class; with its gradual disappearance, the supply of good warlike material began to fail. It is difficult to blame the Emperors, who did their best to protect the peasantry, or the nobles, who were as creditable an aristocracy as any state ever possessed, and for whom land was practically the only safe investment. Another evil, fostered by the victory of orthodoxy, was monachism: the foundation of monasteries became a fashion; men stepped aside by thousands from the active work of life; valuable land passed without hindrance into the Church's dead hand.

On the death of Ignatius in 878 Basil reinstated Photius, whose reappointment was confirmed by Pope John VIII. and by a Church Council held in 879-80. Basil's aim all his life was to keep on good terms with the Bishop of Rome, but the breach between East and West was too wide to be closed by personal friendliness.

Basil in early life had owed much to a Greek lady of Patras named Danielis, who played to him the part of a fairy godmother. Her wealth was enormous;

she appears to have been what would to-day be called a 'multi-millionaire'; and the inventory of her presents and property shows that Peloponnesus must have contained wealthy manufacturing towns as well as agricultural communities and sheep farms, and that prosperity in Greece was at a high level. Basil's private life was not edifying. On the death of his first wife he married Eudocia Ingerina, mistress of Michael III., for the same reason that the Comte Dubarry married Jeanne Vaubernier, and at the same time carried on an intrigue with Michael's sister Thekla. His son by his first wife died in 879; the parentage of the surviving two, Leo and Alexander, was very doubtful. Basil appears to have feared Thekla; his wife's conduct was a scandal, and he passed his last years in an atmosphere of continual suspicion. He died in 886, and Leo and Alexander, whether his children or not, quietly succeeded.

The reigns of Basil I. and Leo VI. form a period of transition from the era of defence and recuperation to that of expansion. Under Irene and the Amorians all the great Mediterranean islands had been lost; but Basil had gained Southern Italy, strengthened imperial influence in the Mediterranean, and secured the frontier on the East. Internally, though the decline in the free agricultural population had already begun, the wealth of the Empire was probably greater than it had ever been. The chaos in Europe drove capital into the single state where life and property were safe and justice was assured. Byzantine commerce filled the Mediterranean; and though Saracen pirates might inflict

much private misery, and now and then deal severe blows, the imperial fleets, on the whole, guarded the trade routes. The trade with the East was extensive and profitable; a very large part of Eurasian commerce was concentrated in the Empire; nearly the entire carrying trade of the Mediterranean was in the hands of its maritime peoples, mainly Greeks. The European provinces had recovered greatly under the vigorous rule of the Iconoclasts; Hellas was especially rich and flourishing. The revenue was large and easily raised; the administration was generally equitable; oppression was decidedly the exception, and not the rule. The comparative inaction of the next eighty years was due mainly to the lack of enterprise—not always unjustified—of the Emperors.

Leo VI.'s first act was to inter the body of Michael III. with full solemnities in the church of The Holy Apostles; it certainly gives colour to the suspicion that Basil was not his father. Leo was a kind of ninth-century Claudius or James I. He had been educated by Photius, and possessed considerable book-learning, but little practical ability. He spent much time in elaborating Court ceremonial and in compiling and re-editing books. A literary Emperor was something of a curiosity to the Constantinopolitans, and when Leo composed a book of political riddles and prophecies they forthwith dubbed him 'the Wise.' Personally he seems to have been a kindly-natured man, but all his reign he was under the influence of ambitious placemen —first, Tzaoutzes Stylianos, then Samonas, a Saracen who was hardly even a nominal Christian. His morals were loose; his four wives overlapped; his

successor was not born in wedlock. Photius was induced to retire in favour of the Emperor's second brother, Stephen, then only eighteen years old. Leo had some bickerings with Stephen's successor, Nikolaos 'the Mystic,' upon the subject of his matrimonial lapses, but otherwise the ecclesiastical peace of the reign was unbroken. Photius, after retiring from the patriarchate, spent the rest of his life in seclusion in an Armenian monastery, where he died in 891.

Internally, the chief event of Leo's reign was the publication of a new and enlarged edition of the 'Basilika,' in sixty books. The administration went on as usual, little affected by the Emperor's personal weakness, except that much trouble was caused by his selfish ministers granting trading monopolies to their creatures. The ultimate consequences of this were disastrous; it brought on war with Bulgaria, between which state and the Empire peace had subsisted for over seventy years, with trifling interruptions. Bulgaria had proved a valuable buffer state on the break-up of the Khazar Empire in the ninth century. It had become semi-civilized and Christian, and had attained a considerable degree of wealth as the middleman between the Empire and Central Europe. In 892 the Bulgarian King Simeon, after vain efforts to secure redress —Leo being hoodwinked by his favourites—invaded the Empire, and defeated the army of Thrace, mutilating his prisoners. Leo raised troubles in his rear by inciting the Turkish Magyars north of the Danube to attack Bulgaria; but Simeon successfully coped with them, and in 893 defeated

a Byzantine army under Theodore the Protovestiarios and Leo Katakalon. Leo had perhaps by this time gained some inkling of the real reason for the war, and he concluded peace.

During Leo's reign the Asiatic frontier was generally defended with success, General Nicephorus Phokas distinguishing himself, about 891, by a very successful invasion of Cilicia. In 902 a Byzantine army marched up to the gates of Aleppo; but the Cretan pirates were very troublesome in the Ægean, raiding Lemnos in 901, and Demetrias in 902. In 904, Leo of Tripolis, a Christian renegade, sailed from Tarsus with a fleet of fifty-four corsair vessels, passed up the Ægean, and descended on Thessalonica, the second city of the Empire, which was almost ungarrisoned. A gate was forced, the great city was sacked, a hideous massacre perpetrated, and 22,000 captives carried off, as we are told—though how they were conveyed requires explanation. In any case the number was very large; and quite apart from the dreadful amount of private misery inflicted, the disgrace was great. The catastrophe was due solely to the neglect of the navy by Leo's favourites.

This shocking disaster forced Leo's administration to pay attention to the navy, and thereafter a large fleet of forty to sixty dromons was kept on foot in the Ægean. In 909 the admiral Himerios gained a considerable victory over the corsairs, but an attack on Crete in 912 resulted in a complete failure.

In the East considerable success was gained, very largely by the private enterprise of phil-Roman

Armenians. Three barons of the region north of Melitene ceded their fiefs to the Empire, which, with some additions, became the new theme of Mesopotamia. An Armenian chief named Mleh, meanwhile, had evicted the Saracens from a considerable tract north-east of Cilicia; he offered his conquest to the Empire, and was made patrician and strategos of the newly-acquired theme, which was named Lykandos, and interrupted direct communication between the Emirs of Malatia and Tarsus. Leo Katakalon was now appointed general of the Armenian frontier, and about 913 he captured Theodosiopolis and wasted Phasiane. The King of Iberia laid claim to these acquisitions, but the difference was adjusted by Romanus I., the Empire retaining Theodosiopolis, and Iberia Phasiane. The imperial boundary in Armenia was therefore in 920 once more where it had been under Maurice.

Leo died in 912; he had reigned nearly twenty-six years, a period, on the whole, of advancing prosperity. The one great disaster had been the sack of Thessalonica; otherwise the isolated raids of the Saracens had done comparatively slight mischief. Territory had been acquired, the Asiatic frontier defended. Leo's personal weakness had not fatally interfered with the working of the administrative machine.

Alexander became sole ruler for a little over a year; he was a mere figurehead, but his administration committed a grievous blunder by rejecting the overtures of Simeon of Bulgaria for a renewal of peace. He endeavoured to protect the succession of his young nephew by appointing a council of

regency, and died in 913. The little Emperor Constantine VIII. at once became the centre of plot and counterplot. Simeon of Bulgaria invaded the Empire in 913, and again in 914, when he gained temporary possession of Adrianople. Amid these disorders the general Constantine Dukas endeavoured to seize the regency. He entered the palace at Constantinople, but was repulsed by the guards and slain, and his house all but extirpated by battle and execution.

The intrigues at the capital ended in the young Emperor's mother, Zoe Carbonopsina, who had been hitherto excluded from public affairs, becoming head of the government. She was known only as a society queen, but showed no lack of energy. In 915 a Saracen fleet was defeated off Myndos, and in 916 a great raid made into Syria and 50,000 captives carried off. Zoe now wisely decided to make a truce with the Khalif and concentrate on Bulgaria. In 917 her envoys reached Baghdad, and peace was concluded on the basis of a general exchange of prisoners. The balance was much in favour of the Empire.

The larger part of the army of Asia was now transferred to Europe. The Pechenegs of the south Russian plain were subsidized to attack Bulgaria; every effort was made to insure success and to increase the spirit of the troops. But the corps commanders were at variance. Leo Phokas, who commanded in chief, was jealous of the admiral, Romanus Lecapenos,* who was to transport the

* Son of Theophylaktos 'The Unbearable.'

Pechenegs across the Danube ; Lecapenos distrusted Phokas. The first engagement resulted in success ; but Phokas wasted time in spying upon Lecapenos, and was not at his post when Simeon gave battle on August 20, 917, near the fort of Achelous. The army was entirely defeated, and retreated on Mesembria, while Lecapenos, hearing of the collapse, sailed home forthwith. He has been accused of deserting his comrades ; but as the broken host reached the capital safely, and repelled an attack by the pursuing Bulgarians, it does not appear that it was in such danger as to render the presence of his fleet indispensable. After much obscure intrigue, Lecapenos was created General of the Foreign Guard ; and his fortunes were greatly advanced by the young Emperor's sudden passion for his youthful daughter Helena. The lovers were united in April, 919, and Lecapenos created Basileopater (Emperor-Father). A revolt under the disappointed Leo Phokas was easily suppressed, and Phokas blinded. Lecapenos next ousted Zoe and forced her into a convent, and was crowned Emperor on December 17, 919.

The young Constantine and his child-wife were soon thrust into the background. Romanus I. has been described as a weak man, but the accusation hardly stands in the face of facts. He was resolute to found a dynasty ; he crowned three of his sons, and in 933 made the fourth, Theophylaktos, Patriarch —a rare example in Byzantine history of the boy-Bishop so common in the West. Theophylaktos, after conducting himself in his sacred office as might have been expected of an indulged and

pleasure-loving youth, died in 956, naturally enough from the results of a riding accident.

In 921 the King of Bulgaria advanced on Constantinople. Romanus's difficulties, with a beaten army and hostile officers and ministers, were great. Afraid to trust a single general, he divided the command among Leo and Pothus Argyros and Johannes Rector. They were defeated, and Simeon sacked the suburbs of the capital. In 923 he again marched on Constantinople, but was repulsed in a gallant action in which Saktikios, a general of the Guard, fell after performing miracles of valour. He thereupon endeavoured to procure the assistance of the Fatimid Khalif of Kairwan, but Romanus, by adroit negotiations, frustrated the design. In 925 Simeon once more advanced and took Adrianople; but Romanus, in a personal interview, succeeded in making peace. One condition was that the Bulgarian Church should be independent under its own Patriarch; the others are not known; it is a mere unsupported conjecture that the Balkan interior was ceded to Simeon. The latter had a legitimate *casus belli*, but he had shown himself a mere barbarian in the brutal ravages which he permitted. We may note, in order to conclude the story of this dangerous enemy, that shortly afterwards his army was completely defeated by the Serbs and Croats, whom he was endeavouring to keep to their allegiance by a series of massacres and ravages, and in 927 he died. His empire collapsed; his successor, Peter, troubled by Magyars without and rebels within, could only maintain himself with difficulty in Bulgaria.

Conquests of Kurkuas

Having concluded peace with Bulgaria, Romanus
l leisure to attend to other matters. The ravages
the Saracen pirates were effectually curbed, if not
elled, by a complete victory gained by Johannes
denos over Leo of Tripolis near Lemnos in 926.
920 Romanus appointed his friend Johannes
rkuas general in the East, and under him the
rk of advancing the border was steadily pursued.
r seven years his feebleness kept him on the
ensive; but after the peace with Bulgaria the
matic corps were again distributed, and Kurkuas
ntrolled a really powerful force. His immediate
ponents were the Emirs of Tarsus and Malatia;
nind them lay other semi-independent Saracen
panages, whose armed strength was usually out of
proportion to their real power. We have seen
at Omár of Malatia could once gather 40,000 men
der his banner; Tarsus and other Cilician towns
re huge colonies of raiders and slave-merchants;
bbon's sneer about the Empire throwing its entire
ength against a single Emirate lacks point.

In 927 Kurkuas wasted Melitene and took Malatia,
ough for the present he was unable to hold it
rmanently. In 929 the Emir of Malatia found
mself so hard-pressed that he capitulated and paid
bute; and Kurkuas crossed the Euphrates. In
e dissolution of the Khalifate, Armenia had re-
wered a precarious independence, though it was
ntinually imperilled by dissensions between the
inces and ecclesiastical differences with the Empire.
urkuas and the Armenians in co-operation carried
before them; Armenia shook itself free from
ohammedan dominion, and Akhlat and Bitlis

became tributary to the Empire, whose eastern terminus thus touched Lake Van. In 934 Malatia was retaken by the Saracens, but next year Kurkuas recaptured and destroyed it, and formally reduced the Emirate to the condition of a theme; of its towns, the Moslems retained only Samosata and Doliche. In 941 Kurkuas made a very successful expedition into Syria, and in 942 he wasted Mesopotamia right up to the line of the Tigris, took Nisibis, and forced Edessa to purchase exemption from sack by a large indemnity and the surrender of the famous 'Handkerchief of our Saviour.' He was removed from his command shortly afterwards apparently on account of accusations brought against him by enemies at Court. It seems clear that Romanus was convinced of his friend's innocence; Kurkuas would probably have been employed again but for his master's fall.

The invasions of Simeon had naturally produced considerable disturbances in Europe among the Slavs, but after 927 they were again reduced to submission. Simeon's successor, Peter, threatened by the Magyars, entered into a close alliance with Romanus, whose granddaughter Maria he married, and received a yearly subsidy, in return for which he engaged to keep off the Magyars. His reign, however, was very troubled; his brother Michael rebelled, and some of his followers actually made a raid into the Empire, and held Nicopolis in Hellas for a time. Servia, which had been brutally wasted by Simeon, placed itself under the protection of the Empire.

Peter could not entirely fulfil his obligations, and

934 a Magyar raid was pushed up to the neighurhood of the capital. It was bought off, as was second in 943. These attacks were trifling, but e Russian invasion of 941 was a serious danger. here had been a Russian raid under Oleg in 907, hich had been bought off by Leo VI.; but this me the attack was on a grand scale. The King of iev was now Igor (Ingvar); he appears, judging om the chronicles, to have been a mere hardinking, hard-fighting, savage Viking; possibly the ttack on 'Micklegarth' or 'Tzargorod' may have een actuated by commercial grievances of the traders Kiev, but probably it was a mere adventurous undering raid. The flotilla which Igor collected is id to have numbered anything from 1,000 to 10,000 essels. The fighting force of the Kingdom of Kiev ay have numbered about 60,000 warriors, and there ay well have been 1,500 miscellaneous craft—of ourse, mostly small. The huge flotilla appeared uddenly in the Bosphorus in the late summer of 41. The danger was great; the fleet was watching rete; the bulk of the army was in the East. The ussians blocked the Bosphorus and landed marauding bodies in Bithynia and Thrace, which behaved ith hideous brutality; crucifixion and burning alive ere the common fate of captives. Only a few hips lay in the Golden Horn, but Theophanes the atrician, who was placed in command, hurriedly atched up superannuated dromons, and fitted out essels completing. Expresses and fire-signal orders ere sent to Cappadocian Cæsarea to Kurkuas, who alled in every man near at hand, and made forced marches on Chalcedon. To compensate for the

terrible disparity of naval force, Greek-fire cannon were mounted on the broadside of each ship, in addition to the usual single one in its turret forward; and Theophanes, with his makeshift force of only fifteen dromons, some hardly seaworthy, sailed out to fight the Russians. The ships were soon engulfed in the swarms of their enemies—probably they lost way owing to the impossibility of working their oar-banks amid the impeding boats; but the crews fought with desperate fury, and repelled innumerable boarding attempts, while the Greek fire was fearfully effective. Igor is said to have lost two-thirds of his flotilla—a statement which seems exaggerated—and the Russians fled, Theophanes, with all of his gallant squadron that could still be fought, audaciously pursuing. For the moment Igor escaped, owing to the bad condition of the Byzantine ships, but his shore detachments were abandoned; Kurkuas, marching day and night from Cæsarea, came on them scattered in Bithynia, and swept them into the sea. Little quarter was given; such prisoners as were taken were ruthlessly put to death. A civilized power fighting a savage enemy must be prepared to strike hard. Theophanes overtook the flying armament in September, and inflicted further terrific losses upon it; only a small remnant finally found its way home. The triumph was a splendid one. The disparity in the size of the Russian and Byzantine vessels should not be allowed to obscure the fact that the former probably outnumbered their opponents in fighting men by ten to one. Theophanes and his heroic crews went out to what they must have regarded as a forlorn hope

gallantly as ever did the men of Leonidas or renville. In 945 peace was concluded once more ith Russia.

Thus amid general success, increasing prestige, ad territorial expansion, the reign of Romanus I. ew to a close. Commerce and manufactures ere in a highly flourishing condition; the sailor mperor took good care of his fleet, and the Moslem ratical squadrons were held in check; Constantine orphyrogenitos was not without justification when e claimed that the Roman Empire ruled the sea. he dark spot on the picture was the steady decline the rural population. From about 922 onwards, r some years, there was a succession of bad urvests, and many small proprietors disappeared such, their holdings being absorbed by the large tates. Romanus did everything in his power to eck the evil. In 922, and again in 935, he omulgated laws against the encroachments of the eat landowners, without, it is to be feared, much fect; economic laws fought against the laws of en, and the agricultural population steadily, if owly, dwindled away. In other ways the Emperor d much for his people. Like Basil I., he was of em himself, and understood their hardships; he ent much in the building and endowment of spitals and other charitable institutions; in no ay, except his treachery to his son-in-law, can he said to have deserved much blame.

The Nemesis of that treachery was to befall him his old age. His own sons, for whom he had iled and had perjured himself, conspired against m. Christophoros was dead; but Stephen and

Constantine seized and tonsured their father, and sent him to the island monastery of Prote (December, 944). They now assumed the supreme power, and were formally crowned, ignoring Constantine VIII., 'Porphyrogenitos,' who had been kept in the background for twenty years. This was too much for the citizens of the capital; Romanus had justified his usurpation—not so his sons, who were besides guilty of disgraceful and unfilial treachery. Rioting broke out; Constantine VIII. emerged from his study, and after some days of intrigue and popular ferment the Lecapenian brothers were deposed, tonsured, and sent to join their father at Prote (December 27, 945). The Patriarch was not molested; neither was Basil, the old Emperor's illegitimate son, who was to play a great part in Byzantine history.

Constantine VIII. had passed the greater part of his life in seclusion and study, and was a dilettante in several departments of culture. Without regarding the flattery of his courtiers, it is fair to assume that he was considerably more accomplished than royal personages commonly are; he was a skilled musician; he had studied painting and sculpture, and appears to have produced pictures of some merit. He had considerable taste for literature, and not only encouraged and patronized authors, but composed several works himself. They include a biography of Basil I.; a little pamphlet on the Themes; a work on the administration of the Empire, for the benefit of his son Romanus, containing much valuable information; another on Court ceremonial, the longest and apparently most

E. Alinari.

A CAPITAL IN THE CHURCH OF SAN VITALE, RAVENNA.

A fine example of the characteristic Byzantine impost resting upon the capital proper.

carefully composed of all; and some treatises on naval and military affairs. Literary rulers who endeavour to write for the benefit of posterity are somewhat rare, but Constantine might fairly claim to be one. In private life he was one of the best men who had occupied the throne—a faithful husband, an indulgent but not a careless father; in intercourse with his friends and dependants a fine specimen of a kindly, amiable gentleman. His family life was most happy; with his subjects he was popular all through his reign.

Good men often make bad sovereigns, but this cannot be said of Constantine; there is no reason whatever to think that he was a nonentity. His lot was, of course, cast in kindly times: the Empire was assailed by no great enemy; the Abbasid Khalifate was hasting to dissolution; Bulgaria, so formidable under Simeon, was now impotent. Saracen pirates may have been troublesome, but were not dangerous; the large fleet now stationed permanently in the Ægean was a bad stumbling-block to the corsairs of Khandak. The Slavs in the Balkan provinces were being steadily drawn into the circle of Byzantine civilization, and many of their nobles were to be found among the civil and military aristocracy. Trade and industry flourished, and amid the general prosperity the handsome, amiable, art-loving Emperor might have been excused for closing his eyes to defects. Such, however, was not the case; the great evil of the times, the decline of the peasantry, did not escape the notice of Constantine. His Novel * of 947 follows the lines of those

* Novella = 'New Law.

of his father-in-law ; like them, it is to be feared that it only temporarily checked the abuse. The splendid administrative system constructed by the Heracliads and Iconoclasts, and perfected by Basil I., worked smoothly ; Constantine had small need to personally interfere, but when he did so it was with reason, and he had a long arm for evil-doers. We are especially informed of the case of Krinitas, Governor of Longobardia, who enriched himself by oppression and fraudulent jobbery in the corn trade of his province, and was deprived of office and fortune by the Emperor. Finlay may be right in supposing that there were many similar cases, but it is to be noted that, if effective supervision could be maintained over the governors of distant Longobardia, the same was likely to be the case nearer home. Constantine attended carefully and conscientiously to public business, and made no more mistakes than a nominally despotic monarch, whose power is limited by that of a great bureaucracy, is likely to commit. His wife Helena assisted him in his task, nor need we suppose that her influence was always for the bad. Later in his reign his youngest daughter, Agatha, who had been his constant companion in his study, was his confidential secretary. His chief ministers were Basilios, 'the Bird,' and Joseph Bringas, the latter by far the more important figure of the two, and the chief administrator of the Empire until 963. John Kurkuas was restored to favour by Constantine, though the veteran was not again employed in the field ; he was probably past active work. The Argyros family were also retained in office and favour, but the Phokai of Cappadocia now

became the most prominent of the great noble houses. Bardas, their head, who had served long under Kurkuas, became commander-in-chief in the East; his three sons, Nicephorus, Leo, and Constantine, were appointed to themes. Another prominent figure was that of the eunuch Basil Lecapenos, who was retained in favour by Constantine.

The appointment of Bardas Phokas was not a success; the Phokai had a bad reputation for avarice; and Bardas allowed discipline to relax while he peculated the supplies and made profit out of prisoners. In 950 Seif-ed-dawleh of Hamadan, now Emir of Syria, burst through the line of defence and plunged into Cappadocia, wasting and destroying; but on his return he was overtaken in the passes of Amanus by the Byzantine army, and entirely defeated, with the loss of spoils, prisoners, and baggage. In 954 Bardas Phokas was superseded, not before it was time, by his son Nicephorus; but the first essay of this afterwards famous chief was unsuccessful; he was badly beaten by Seif-ed-dawleh. The army had evidently become disorganized, and while Nicephorus toiled at the work of reconstruction, the Emir of Tarsus made a naval raid along the Cilician and Pamphylian coast, but was gallantly met and defeated by Basil, general of the Kibyrraiot Theme, with the small naval force of his district.

By 958 Phokas had thoroughly reorganized his command, and everything was ready for the great advance now near at hand. In that year Leo Phokas and Basil Lecapenos marched for Samosata. Lecapenos defeated the Saracens in the field, and

the stronghold passed once more into Roman hands. In Europe the Magyars made their way through the feeble guard of Bulgaria, and pushed up to the neighbourhood of the capital, but they were defeated and driven off in a night surprise by Pothus Argyrus.

In 959 a great expedition under Constantine Gongyles was sent against Crete. It landed in the island without difficulty—a fact which shows that, like Algiers, the Khandak robber horde had no real offensive power; but Khandak itself was enormously strong, and the besieging force met with disaster. Constantine began to make preparations for a fresh attack, but his health was already failing. He tried to recruit by a tour in Bithynia, but without avail, and returned to Constantinople only to die, November 9, 959. His death was widely lamented, so much so that it was attributed to poison administered by Theophano, the low-born beauty whom the kindly Emperor had permitted to marry his son Romanus. She was capable of crime, as we shall see, but there is no evidence that she repaid her father-in-law's kindness by plotting his death; the accusation seems ridiculous.

Romanus II. calls for little notice; he was a gay, pleasure-loving young man of twenty-one, by no means unamiable—though he obliged his sisters to retire into monastic privacy — but more occupied with the delights of power than its duties. Quite possibly his character would have matured and strengthened with advancing years, but he did not live long. Joseph Bringas controlled the administration, and great preparations were made to settle the Cretan question once and for all. Nicephorus

EASTERN EMPIRE, A.D., 959.
Direct Rule
Indirect Rule & Influence
(Outlined thus)
HUNGARY
PECHENEGS
ALANIA
IBERIA
ARMENIA
CHALDIA
ABASGIA
CHERSON
BULGARIA
SERVIA
CROBATIA
DALMATIA
DYRRHACHIUM
NICOPOLIS
SCLAVINIA
HELLAS
STRYMON
MACEDONIA
THRACE
CONSTANTINOPLE
OPTIMATON
BUKELLARION
PAPHLAGONIA
ARMENIAKON
SEBASTEA
CHARSIANA
CAPPADOCIA
ANATOLIKON
THRAKESION
KIBYRA
SELEUCIA
LYCANDOS
MESOPOTAMIA
THEODOSIOPOLIS
TARON
ASPARUKAN
KOLDIKA
CORSICA
SARDINIA
SICILY
KINGDOM OF KAIRWAN
FATIMID KHALIFATE
EMIRATE OF HALEB (HAMADANITES)
EMIRATE OF MOSUL
ABBASID KHALIFATE
BAGHDAD
CYPRUS
CRETE
Venice
Sirmium
Belgrade
Vidin
Nisch
Trnova
Presthlava
Silistria
Sardica
Mesembria
Adrianople
Philippopolis
Arcadiopolis
Thessalonica
Lemnos
Abydos
Cyzicus
Prusa
Nicaea
Nicomedia
Ancyra
Dorylaeum
Amorium
Pergamus
Smyrna
Sardes
Ephesus
Samos
Thebes
Athens
Corinth
Patras
Zacynthus
PELOPONNESUS
Monemvasia
Khandak
Rhodes
Attalia
Kibyra
Antioch
Tarsus
Tripolis
Damascus
Jerusalem
Aleppo
Edessa
Samosata
Tyana
Iconium
Caesarea
Sebaste
Amasea
Amisus
Sinope
Trapezus
Phasis
Kars
Ani
Theodosiopolis
Akhlat
Bitlis
Miarfakan
Diyarbekr
Venice
Spalatro
Ragusa
Dyrrhachium
Bari
Otranto
Coreyra
Nicopolis
Leucas
Cephallenia
Reggio
Gaeta
Naples
Amalfi
Cherson
Sarkel ?

Phokas was called from the East to take command; and in July, 960, a fleet of 300 war-vessels and 360 transports with a picked army on board sailed from Pygela, near Ephesus, and blockaded Khandak by land and sea. The place was strongly garrisoned, and there was besides an army at large in the island. A Byzantine detachment was cut off by it, and Phokas had to destroy it before he could securely besiege Khandak. This was successfully accomplished; the pirates were remorselessly hunted down and massacred, and hundreds of heads flung as a ghastly reminder into Khandak, which was closely blockaded for many months. In the spring of 961 the siege was pressed forward, and on May 7 the great stronghold was stormed. The slaughter was great, and the booty of every kind enormous. Crete, after the lapse of 135 years, was again a part of the Empire.

Meanwhile, Seif-ed-dawleh had deemed that the absence of great part of the army of Asia afforded a fine opportunity for a raid. He entered Cappadocia and did much damage, but on his retreat he was waylaid by Leo Phokas near Andrassos and utterly defeated, hardly escaping with his own life, and losing almost all his army. This fine success seriously weakened the position of 'Khabdan'—the Hamadanite—and in 962 Nicephorus, after being complimented and fêted at Constantinople by his sovereign, prepared to take the offensive; 100,000 splendid troops were concentrated at the frontier. Leaving part of his force to watch Cilicia, Phokas marched through Taurus with the remainder, stormed the frontier fortress of Anazarbus, and entered

Northern Syria. Seif-ed-dawleh had made desperate efforts, but his army was untrustworthy, and he could only stand on the defensive, while Phokas took Doliche and Membij. A huge levy from Mesopotamia and Southern Syria was advancing to his rescue, but Phokas was too quick for them. The Emir was in a strong position before Aleppo; Phokas turned his flank, and forced him to fight in the open. He was totally defeated, his palace outside the walls, his treasure and stud, captured; his beaten troops and the citizens quarrelled and fought, and amid the internecine strife the city was stormed. A part of the garrison escaped into the citadel, which was too strong to be carried by assault; but for ten days the victorious army worked its will on Aleppo. Phokas did not care to risk a battle with the oncoming Syro-Mesopotamian host—his line of communication was not very secure—and before it arrived he quietly withdrew; but his army was burdened with prisoners and booty, and sixty strong places on the slopes of Taurus and Amanus were permanently gained.

In Europe the Magyars had once again made their way through Bulgaria into Thrace, but were defeated by Marinus Argyros.

On March 15, 963, Romanus II. died very suddenly after a reign of little more than three years. His manner of living sufficiently explains his early death, but popular gossip naturally attributed it to poison administered by his wife, who was in childbed at the time! It might be more reasonably ascribed to the great landowners, since a fresh law in the interests of the peasants had just been passed;

actually there is no ground for believing it due to foul-play.

We have seen that the early Macedonian period was one of considerable military success and territorial expansion, but for the most part the head of the State does not take the field. We have now to deal with an age of great military Emperors, and are justified in especially indicating it as the era of 'The Great Conquerors.'

CHAPTER XIV

THE GREAT CONQUERORS

The warrior regents—Nicephorus II.—Conquests in East—His Bulgarian policy—Unwise financial measures, unpopularity, and murder—John I.—Defeat of the Russian conquests in East and West—*Rapprochement* with Western Empire—Basil II.—Sklerainian and Phokan revolts—The Bulgarian revival—Basil's internal policy—Conquest of Bulgaria, Servia, etc.—Acquisitions in East—Estimate of Basil's character and work.

ROMANUS II. left two little sons—Basil, aged seven, and Constantine, who was only two. His wife had besides borne him two daughters—Theophano, now about five, destined to play a great part as Empress of the West; and Anna, born two days before her father's death, afterwards Queen of Russia.

The condition of the Empress left the entire administration in the hands of Joseph Bringas; and as he was known to be bitterly jealous of Phokas, a struggle was imminent. Romanus had left it as his dying injunction that Phokas, indisputably the Empire's ablest general, was not to be deprived of his command, and general feeling in his favour was so strong that Bringas did not dare to openly oppose it. Phokas celebrated a triumph in the

capital for his Syrian victories, and, after taking a solemn oath of fidelity to his young masters, departed for the frontier. Bringas, determined to overthrow him, endeavoured to enlist in his interest the corps commanders of the army of Asia, especially Johannes Kurkuas, afterwards surnamed 'Tchemchkik,'* who had been the right hand of his uncle Phokas in the Syrian campaign. Kurkuas's later conduct shows that he was capable of committing any crime under the influence of ambition or disappointment, but he showed no present disposition to be disloyal to his uncle. Phokas was saluted Emperor by the army in the time-honoured fashion, and marched for Constantinople. Basil Lecapenos, with his household of 3,000 retainers and slaves, raised a revolt in his favour in the capital; Bringas was forced to take sanctuary, and Phokas was crowned as Nicephorus II. by the Patriarch Polyeuktes, August 16, 963.

Nicephorus II. was above all things a soldier, but he was deeply, and rather fanatically, religious, and seems to have had a strong hankering after a monastic life. He strengthened his position by marrying Theophano. The marriage can hardly have been more than nominal; Phokas was fifty-two, harsh of countenance, stern and repulsive in manner and bearing; Theophano, about twenty-four, singularly beautiful and winning. The Patriarch was not friendly to the Emperor, and endeavoured

* This surname was given to Kurkuas by his Armenian soldiers. Its probable meaning is 'Little Red-boot.' He was a small man, and the epithet may be compared to that of 'Petit Caporal' conferred by his troops upon another diminutive warrior. It was Hellenized into 'Zimiskes.'

to prevent the consummation of the marriage, but without success. He gave trouble also by his narrow-minded ideas on the subject of the sin of bloodshed; they were possibly in some sense justifiable, but, seeing that the very existence of the Empire was bound up with that of the army, their public expression was pernicious. Nicephorus, failing to obtain adequate support from the clergy, retorted by a Novel, by which he enacted that all nominations, promotions, and decisions of the clergy were invalid without the consent of the Emperor.

His financial measures were entirely directed to the war-budget. He cut down pensions and grants, and suppressed pageantry in the capital. This, naturally, did not tend to his popularity, but it was justifiable, which cannot be said of his issuing base coins and paying the State debts therewith, while the taxes continued to be exacted in the old pure pieces. The action was a bad one in every way. More justifiable was his Novel of 964 to protect the peasant proprietors against the large landholders; the situation of the former was evidently becoming steadily worse.

During the autumn and winter of 963-64 Nicephorus was chiefly employed at the capital. John 'Tchemchkik' was left in charge of the eastern frontier, and soon showed his ability. When a Saracen army threatened an invasion from Cilicia, he marched boldly against it, and drove it back into Syria by a victory at Adana so complete that the demoralized Moslems spoke of the field as the 'Hill of Blood.' In 964 Nicephorus himself took over the command. His first attempt

in Tarsus was repulsed, but he besieged and took Adana and Mopsuestia, and recaptured Anazarbus, which had fallen back into Moslem hands in the previous year. In 965 he again blockaded Tarsus, and after a long siege forced it into surrender. The whole Mohammedan population was permitted to depart, with immediate personal property only; the measure was harsh but necessary; the inhabitants were chiefly raiders and slave-traders. The city was repeopled by Christian colonists, largely Armenians. In the same year an expedition under the patrician Niketas regained Cyprus, after a Saracen occupation of seventy-seven years.

Meanwhile in Europe affairs on the northern frontier needed the imperial presence. Bulgaria was fast falling to decay. In 963 it had broken into two kingdoms, Shishman of Trnova making himself independent in the West. In 967 another Magyar raid slipped through into Thrace. It was easily repelled, but Nicephorus now informed the unfortunate Tzar Peter that, as he could not protect the Empire, the subsidy would be discontinued. He advanced against Bulgaria, but unaccountably retired without accomplishing anything. Probably his attention was diverted to the West, where the great Emperor Otto I. was very active. Otto invaded the imperial territories, assisted by Pandulf of Beneventum, but he gained no success of importance. Pandulf was taken prisoner; he himself was repulsed before Bari; the very weak forces of the Theme of Italy were sufficient to check him.

An expedition which Nicephorus sent against Sicily in 967 under the patrician Niketas was defeated by the forces of the Fatimid Khalif Moëz. This was the one military disaster of his reign. In the capital, however, he was very unpopular; things reached such a pass that he was pelted in the streets, and a woman caught in the act of throwing a stone was burnt alive—a savage piece of cruelty, especially when we consider that punishments were steadily tending to become milder. Nicephorus fortified the palatial enclosure, and never moved out except with a strong guard. It was about this time that Luitprand of Cremona made his second visit to Constantinople; his account of things in general and the Emperor in particular is most unflattering.

Nicephorus, having unaccountably failed against Bulgaria, tried a new plan. He sent the patrician Kalokyres with a subsidy of 1,500 pounds of gold (£70,000) to Sviatoslav, son of Igor, King of Russia, a fierce warrior of the most pronounced Viking type. Russia had recovered from the blow dealt in 941; it was far more than a match for the divided and weakened Bulgaria. Kalokyres, once in Russia, proclaimed himself Emperor, gave the gold as his own, and persuaded Sviatoslav to conquer Bulgaria and make it a base for an attack on Constantinople by land. The question as to what length of shrift he himself was likely to obtain from the King, when the latter had taken Constantinople, he seems to have deferred until a more fitting season. Sviatoslav in 967 advanced against Bulgaria; he established himself at New Presthlava, a foundation of his own near Tulcea, on the Danube, and rapidly

conquered all the north except Silistria, which he was besieging when he was suddenly recalled to Russia by the news that the Pechinegs were attacking Kiev.

In the spring of 968, Nicephorus, apparently freed from the Russian danger, returned to the East and burst into Syria, at the head of a splendid army of 80,000 men. Antioch was passed for the moment, while Nicephorus pressed through Syria, ravaging as he went, taking and sacking towns, to the neighbourhood of Damascus. Membij, Latakia, Aleppo, Hems, were taken; Damascus and Tripoli saved themselves from pillage by a ransom. Having overrun Syria as far as Hermon, Nicephorus turned back to besiege Antioch; but, winter being at hand, he left only a small force entrenched outside, under Michael Burtzes, with orders to observe the city until spring, and cantoned the main body some distance to the north. He left his eunuch kinsman Petros in command, and returned to Constantinople.

Burtzes soon found that the garrison kept bad watch, and decided on a bold attempt to cut the long line of defence. On a dark night, screened by a raging snowstorm, he led a band of 300 chosen soldiers to the foot of the wall, and carried two towers by an audacious escalade. He at once hurried off messengers to Phokas; but the latter, afraid of his sovereign's anger, delayed to advance; for two days Burtzes and his gallant band fought for their lives, repelling attack after attack of the aroused and desperate garrison. On the third day Phokas's sense of honour conquered his dread, and

he came up in time to save Burtzes and capture the city. His fear was justified ; he was dismissed from his command, but so, too, was Burtzes—for winning a city without orders! He swore revenge; and dearly did Nicephorus pay for his 'Martinetism.'

Nicephorus did not go East in 969 ; the affairs of Bulgaria were pressing. The aged Peter passed away in January. Shishman of Trnova at once attempted to seize the sovereignty of the entire kingdom, but was repulsed by Boris, son of Peter, assisted by Nicephorus, who concluded an offensive and defensive alliance with him. But in the summer Sviatoslav reached New Presthlava with a host of 60,000 warriors, and set out to conquer Bulgaria. This time there was little resistance; the towns were taken or gained over ; Boris, in despair, acknowledged his supremacy. Much of this must be attributed to Nicephorus's bad policy. He had failed to either assist or conquer Bulgaria; the tottering kingdom became the prey of the power which moved first ; it was evident that, so far from his pursuing a triumphant career in the East, the next year would see a defensive campaign in Thrace.

Meanwhile his harshness had alienated everyone ; indeed, at this date, he was generally hated. Theophano was privy to a plot against him, and in it were enlisted John 'Tchemchkik,' the ill-treated Burtzes, and several other distinguished men. The powerful Basil Lecapenos was at least cognizant of the design. As regards Kurkuas, ambition forms a sufficiently strong motive for his action ; it is possible that he had other private reasons. Burtzes

THE TAURUS MOUNTAINS NEAR ADANA, CILICIA.

The Taurus chain formed the great barrier to the Mohammedans for more than four centuries, and the plain of Cilicia was continually the battle-field of Empire and Khalifate. Adana was the scene of a great victory over the Mohammedans in 964, gained by General Johannes

had a grievance strong enough to steel his heart against all pity. Nicephorus had certainly neglected Theophano, and he was suspected of a design of emasculating Basil and Constantine. At midnight of December 10-11 Kurkuas and his companions rowed in a boat to the sea-wall of the palatial enclosure, and were hoisted up it in baskets by Theophano and her ladies. Joined by such of the conspirators as were already in the palace, they hastened to the chamber of Nicephorus, where he lay peacefully asleep on the floor, wrapped in his cloak. John awoke him with a kick, and as he looked up the others sprang upon him and stabbed savagely. 'O God! have mercy on me!' he cried amid his sufferings; then one of the murderers cleft his head, and the tragedy ended. With all his faults, he had been a not unworthy occupant of the throne.

John showed some contrition for his share in the terrible crime. He distributed his entire private fortune among the poor, and endowed a hospital for lepers. He refused to see Theophano, who had fixed her fancy upon his handsome face, and exiled her to the Armenian border. Basil Lecapenos, now President of the Senate, undertook the business of removing her, and in her rage and despair she violently assaulted him. John also sacrificed two of his fellow-murderers who had done most of the butcher's work. He conciliated the Patriarch by abrogating the anticlerical Novel of his predecessor, but when Polyeuktes died he showed himself high-handed in appointing and deposing his successors. The relatives of the dead Emperor were involved

in his fate. Leo, who had been Curopalates, was exiled to Lesbos, and on escaping and raising revolt was captured with his elder son Nicephorus. Both were nominally blinded ; as a fact they retained their sight : the apparently terrible sentence was often a very merciful one. Leo's second son, Bardas, General of Chaldia and Koloneia, was confined at Amasea, but escaped and raised the standard of revolt, and John had to march against him.

John married Theodora, one of the daughters of Constantine Porphyrogenitos ; he took care to conciliate public legitimist opinion by treating his boy colleagues as his equals. He decided to come to terms with Otto the Great, and, releasing Pandulf of Beneventum, sent him to open peace negotiations. These were naturally protracted, but successfully concluded ; and finally sealed by the marriage of Theophano, the sister of the young Emperors, to Otto II., heir and colleague of Otto, at Rome in April, 972.

John hardly appears to have thought that Sviatoslav, now supreme from Novgorod to Hæmus, would dare to attack the Empire. He was terribly undeceived. In 970 a host of Russians and Bulgarians crossed Hæmus, wasted northern Thrace, and stormed Philippopolis, massacring 20,000 of its inhabitants. John in Asia could do nothing ; the only obstacle to a Russian advance was a small army in Thrace under the able general Bardas Skleros. John sent an embassy with a haughty order to Sviatoslav to quit the Empire. It was dismissed as haughtily, and the Russo-Bulgarian host proceeded down the valley of the Hebrus,

passed Adrianople, and found Skleros waiting for them before Arcadiopolis. They were totally defeated, and when they regained Bulgaria had lost, by flight, desertion, and battle, 20,000 men.

Thrace was saved; but the Russian host, reinforced by Bulgarians and adventurers from all quarters, was in force north of the Balkans. John determined to take the field in person. Skleros was rewarded by the command in Asia; his immediate task was to crush the rebellion of Phokas. John proceeded to the capital, and, besides collecting troops from the themes, organized an imperial guard of picked men, largely infantry from the Armenian border, which he named 'The Immortals.' A fleet of 300 ships was to enter the Danube and cut off the Russian retreat. John's strategy bespoke a haughty confidence in himself and his army; it was no light thing to deliberately force 100,000 fierce warriors to fight with their backs to the wall, especially when the needs of Asia made his own immediate force much smaller than it would otherwise have been.

In the early spring of 971 John concentrated on Adrianople. He had with him the 'Immortal' Guard and 15,000 infantry and 13,000 cavalry of the themes—38,000 men at the utmost, probably considerably less. Despite the severe lesson of Arcadiopolis, the Russians were in a state of overweening security; they appear to have believed that John would not take the field before Easter. Sviatoslav himself was on the Danube, perhaps negotiating with Shishman, while a Russo-Bulgarian army, under a chief named Sviatogor ('Sphengelos')

and the traitor Kalokyres, lay about Great Presthlava. Relying on the Eastertide rumour or fiction, they were not holding the passes of Hæmus. John was not the man to consult his enemies' convenience, and broke up from Adrianople a fortnight earlier than had been expected.

The infantry of the 'Immortals' was at the head of the column, to clear the way; the Emperor with his personal guards followed; behind him came the mass of the infantry; the cavalry, which could be of little use in the mountains, was in the rear. The passes were unguarded; the army came through with the slightest opposition; Sviatogor and Kalokyres were hurriedly concentrating. In front of Presthlava they gave battle to the Emperor; they were entirely defeated, and John pushed on to assault the city. It was carried by escalade, the garrison of the citadel massacred, and King Boris and his family taken prisoners. Sviatogor with a part of his army escaped, but in the two days' battle he had lost 15,000 men.

Sviatoslav was advancing to support his lieutenant, when the news of Presthlava reached him. He learned also that the imperial fleet was in the Danube, and, realizing his danger, picked up Sviatogor and retreated on Silistria. There he found his passage across the river blocked by the fleet, and turned like a tiger at bay on John, who, after a brief halt to rest his troops and celebrate Easter, was following from Presthlava. Sviatoslav's army now consisted mainly of Russians, sturdy infantry in iron mail, covered from chin to foot with huge shields, and wielding heavy axes and spears.

But he lacked troops armed with missile weapons, and his only cavalry were lightly-equipped raiders. On April 23 the two hosts collided some way south of Silistria, and after a gallant resistance the heavy Russian columns gave way before the scientific combination of infantry and cavalry attacks, and retreated on the fortress. John followed and entrenched himself outside the town; his great force of cavalry enabled him to blockade it completely, but his army was far too small to attempt a storm.

For some three months the siege wore on. The place was well supplied, but at length the great host inside began to exhaust its provisions. The steady blockade never slackened, and Sviatoslav, like Osman at Plevna, resolved to fight his way out; his superiority in numbers gave him a fair chance of escape. On July 23 the Russian host moved out for its last effort, and for a time appeared likely to succeed. No doubt there was some difficulty in concentrating the blockading army at the point of danger; the Byzantine lines were broken, and the Emperor had to abandon scientific combination and endeavour to bar the onward march of the huge ironclad infantry masses by desperate and repeated cavalry charges, like those by which Napoleon stemmed the tide of disaster at Eylau. After a tremendous struggle—so desperate that men said that St. Theodore appeared to rally the reeling squadrons—the Russians were brought to a stand; the Byzantine infantry came into action; after hours of furious combat their storm of arrows broke down the stolid resistance, shattered the steady squares, and left

them at the mercy of the cavalry. Sviatoslav's last hope was gone. He left 15,500 dead on the field, and retreated on Silistria. Prisoners were probably few.

Sviatoslav, beaten at last, sued for peace, and was granted generous terms. He was to march out with arms and personal baggage, and to be supplied for his march to Russia, on condition of surrendering Silistria with the plunder and captives there collected, and of renewing the former treaty with the Empire. After the conclusion of the negotiations, he asked for a personal interview with his conqueror. The request was granted, and the two gallant warriors met and conversed by the bank of the Danube, Sviatoslav coming by boat from Silistria, John riding down with his guards from his camp. What passed between them we know not. The simple dress of the Russian appears to have struck the splendidly-arrayed Byzantine guardsmen; the description of his physiognomy would seem to show that already the Scandinavian blood of Rurik was much diluted with that of the Slavs. Sviatoslav was fair-haired and blue-eyed, but snub-nosed. Sviatoslav, on his side, probably wondered, like the Mamelukes when they saw Napoleon, how it came about that the little fair Armeniac, with the gay blue eyes and cheerful smile, was so terrible a fighter, and perhaps attributed the mystery to magic. He commenced his homeward march immediately afterwards; after four great battles, a long siege, and the wear and tear of two years, he had still 22,000 warriors, a figure which probably includes no allies, who would hardly accompany him

to Russia, and is eloquent of the magnitude of the task so gloriously achieved by John. He was slain next year by the Pechenegs, and never reached Kiev. John, having organized East Bulgaria as a province, returned to Constantinople to celebrate a magnificent and well-merited triumph.

Meanwhile Skleros had dealt successfully with Phokas, who was captured and imprisoned at Chios; while his father, after another fruitless attempt at sedition, was blinded in earnest. In 972 a Saracen attack on Antioch was defeated by the Patrician Nikolaos, and next year John took command in the East. He was, however, turned from his purpose by troubles with the Armenians, who now dreaded the heretic Empire almost as much as the infidels; and on his return to Constantinople the general Mleh was attacked by a great levy from Mesopotamia, defeated and captured near Diarbekr. Antioch and other places were lost. In 974 John again came eastward, captured Diarbekr and Miarfarkan, and pressed on down the Tigris against Baghdad. He did not take the decayed capital of the Abbasids; the terror inspired by his advance was so great that the Khalif and his Buhawid Mayor of the Palace sued for peace, which was granted in return for a great subsidy and an annual tribute.

John returned to winter in Armenia, and in the spring of 975 took the field once more. He marched by Diarbekr and Miarfarkan through Mesopotamia to Nisibis, which was found deserted, and thence turned back, sweeping the open country as far as Edessa, which paid tribute. Thence, crossing the

Euphrates into Syria, he captured Membij, Apamea, Hems, and Baalbek, and besieged Damascus, which again ransomed itself to escape storm and pillage. John is said to have actually occupied Jerusalem, and to have sent presents thence to his friend Ashot of Taron, but this seems impossible; had he taken the sacred city, we should have had some definite record of the event. From Damascus, he forced his way through Lebanon to the Syrian coast, captured Beirut, but failed to take Tripoli, and finally swept the coast to Antioch, which, as we have seen, had relapsed to the Mohammedans. It refused to surrender, and John left Burtzes to besiege it, and proceeded homewards. Burtzes captured it for the second time early in 976. The whole campaign had been very successful; the failure at Tripoli had been the only reverse; the plunder had been immense; the ransoms and tribute money alone amounted to 3,000,000 nomismata.

The Emperor's health was however failing; he was only fifty-one, but his whole life had been passed in the field. He proceeded slowly through Cilicia, intending to recruit himself at the capital, and near Anazarbus passed immense cattle-ranches, which upon inquiry he was informed were the property of Basil Lecapenos, largely granted by himself and his predecessor. 'So,' he remarked bitterly, 'I have slaved like a mercenary and worn out my armies to enrich a greedy eunuch!' The remark is said to have been reported to Lecapenos, and he proceeded to hasten the progress of disease by administering poison. The story has no certain

foundation. John was very ill when he reached the capital, but the fatigue and exposure of a long campaign in Syria amply account for his death, which occurred on January 10, 976.

If Lecapenos really had murdered John in the hope of obtaining the supreme control of affairs, he was doomed to disappointment. The corps commanders of the army were sullen, and when he tried to remove Bardas Skleros from power and temptation by sending him to a remote command in Mesopotamia, the general revolted, not to dethrone the lawful Emperors, but to secure the position which John I. had held. His difficulties were immense, but his skill and courage were great. He depended largely upon the tributary Moslem Emirs on the frontier, especially those of Diarbekr and Miarfarkan. The young Emperor Basil was entirely without military experience; nor was the minister anxious that he should acquire any; for the present he appears to have been devoted to the pursuit of pleasure.

Lecapenos placed in command against Skleros Petros Phokas, whom we have met at Antioch. Skleros defeated him twice on the Armenian frontier, and a third time at Lycandos. He collected a naval force under Manuel Curticius, which defeated the imperial fleet, and in 978 seized Abydos, while Skleros was advancing on Chalcedon; but at this juncture Theodore Karantenos appeared in the Hellespont with another squadron, which completely annihilated that of Skleros.

Bardas Phokas was now called from his monastic prison, and took command of the broken imperial

troops in Asia; but he was no match in skill for Skleros, who defeated him at Pankalia on the Sangarius. Phokas retreated eastward, perforce followed by Skleros, who defeated him again at Basilika Therma in Charsiana. He now fled into Iberia, but was supplied with munitions and recruits by the king, David, and again entered Asia Minor in 979. On March 24 he came up with Skleros, and a third battle took place, which went against Phokas until he succeeded in overthrowing his rival in single combat. Skleros was saved by his personal adherents, but his fall broke the only tie which bound the rebel army together. It dispersed or joined Phokas, who regained the Asiatic provinces almost without a blow; the last Sklerainian bands were suppressed in 980. For eight years Phokas commanded the army in Asia, and was practically supreme there. His exploits call for no special notice; he maintained the frontier without difficulty, led several expeditions into Syria and Mesopotamia, and forced the Emir of Aleppo again to pay tribute.

In Europe, about 978, Samuel, son of Shishman, became King of West Bulgaria. He was a man of extreme vigour and ability, and took full advantage of the preoccupation of the Empire with the rebellion of Skleros. He entered Macedonia, and easily persuaded the Slavonic inhabitants to throw off the imperial yoke. In a comparatively short time he had extended his sway over the entire Balkan inland west of a line drawn from Thessalonica to the Danube. It was almost entirely a peaceful conquest; the Slavonic chiefs simply paid their tribute to Samuel instead of to the imperial

officials; few places offered any armed resistance. Samuel gained Durazzo, and thus had a free outlet to the Adriatic, enabling him to open communications with the enemies of the Empire in the West.

There, in 982, Otto II. attacked the imperial possessions in Italy, but he sustained a great defeat from an army of Byzantine troops and African Saracens near Croton. The troubles in Italy satisfactorily account for the inactivity of the government until 983, but after that date it is hard to understand. Possibly Phokas would not give up his semi-independent and lucrative position in Asia for a far more laborious one in Europe. The Court, too, was occupied with the contest between the Emperor Basil and the President.

In 986 Basil had so far gained the upper hand that he was able to take command of the army in Europe. Samuel was now a formidable adversary. By 986 he had thoroughly consolidated his power in the Balkans inland. The Slavs, who had hoped to gain complete independence, soon found that they had merely changed a mild master for a hard one; the horse had taken the man on his back and could not shake him off. To procure something like acquiescence in his government, Samuel was forced, even if he had not desired it—which there is no reason to believe—to keep the restless chiefs and their retainers constantly engaged in lucrative warfare. It is very doubtful whether the opposition to the Empire was national; it seems to have depended almost entirely upon Samuel's personal ability and influence. The King's transference of

his centre of power from Bulgaria to Macedonia was probably dictated largely by the necessity of holding down the ill-compacted Slavonic tribes ; his kingdom was almost as much 'a government without a nation' as the Empire. He established his capital first at Prespa, but soon shifted it to the more central fortress of Ochrida, which he peopled by forcing captives to settle therein. In 986 he invaded Greece and besieged Larissa. Basil marched from Philippopolis on Sardica, hoping thus to draw Samuel northward, but the plan did not succeed. The young Emperor was untried in war; the Army of Europe was not good, either as regards *morale* or discipline; many of the officers were mere creatures of Lecapenos, and failed to do their duty with fidelity. The siege of Sardica failed, and on the retreat to Philippopolis Samuel, who had returned from the south, struck in upon the line of march, captured the greater part of the baggage, and badly cut up the army, Basil himself escaping with difficulty.

The defeat had disastrous results. Samuel took Larissa, carried off its inhabitants to Ochrida, and then overran Roman Bulgaria, which he conquered without difficulty, except the fortress of Silistria and the district at the mouth of the Danube. Worse than this, Basil's apparent incapacity roused Phokas to revolt. It is probable that the President of the Senate was the real instigator, but Phokas was doubtless prompted also by personal ambition. On August 15, 987, he was proclaimed Emperor at the palace of Eustathios Maleïnos in Charsiana. The revolt was distinctly an aristocratic and feudal

one; its supporters were the great landed gentry and their retainers.

At this juncture suddenly reappears on the scene the long-vanished figure of Bardas Skleros, who had been for eight years half refugee, half captive, at Baghdad. Phokas was therefore hampered by the necessity of dealing with his old rival, but he captured him by a piece of disgraceful treachery, and was able to devote all his energy to the task of dethroning Basil.

The difficulties of the Emperor were enormous. His Empire was divided against itself; the Army of Asia was chiefly on the rebel side, that of Europe disorganized and demoralized. From Italy he could draw no reinforcements, and Samuel was conquering in Macedonia and Bulgaria. At home his most powerful minister was his secret enemy.

Basil's best resource lay in himself. He was now over thirty years of age, and had learned experience in the school of adversity. Little or no attempt had been made before 976 to train him for the exercise of his duties. It is not clear whether this was due to his warrior guardians or to their supporter the President; but it would certainly appear that the latter did all in his power to render his young masters ineffective by endeavouring to confine their attention to pleasure. With Constantine he succeeded; but Basil was both older and stronger, and broke loose from the idle splendour of the palace. His career, scanty as are the details which we possess of it, shows him to have been not merely a great warrior but a true statesman, who had a clear perception of the evils of the times, and was

unremitting in his efforts to remedy them. He was capable of forming great and far-reaching plans, and utterly regardless of himself as of others in carrying them out, patient, tireless, and morally pure. He never married; he had, indeed, taken monastic vows. In what his asceticism originated it is impossible to say; possibly he possessed the curious hankering after the cloister which characterized so many East Romans; perhaps a disappointment in love lay behind it. It had fatal consequences; had Basil, like Leo III., been succeeded by a son trained by himself, the course of history might have been different. Of the avarice of which Basil is accused there is no proof; the charge of ruthless cruelty rests chiefly upon one terrible incident. He seems to have been naturally a kindly man of social tastes and habits; it was in his later years, when embittered by his long struggle against enemies within and without, that he became stern, harsh, and solitary.

All through 988 Phokas was strengthening himself in Asia Minor, and Basil preparing to oppose him. In this year appeared the first proofs of his administrative activity, a Novel on the ever-pressing land question.

At the beginning of 989 he was suddenly threatened by Russia, whose king, Vladimir, son of Sviatoslav, seized Cherson, and sent envoys to Constantinople asking for an imperial princess to wife, and missionaries to teach him and his the Christian faith. Basil could not afford war at this moment. He offered his sister Anna to Vladimir, who handed back Cherson and sent his brother-in-

daw a body of picked warriors. The alliance had important results, and Basil owed much to Vladimir's steady assistance.

Then Basil prepared to meet Phokas. Half the rebel army was sent on under Kalokyres Delphinas to threaten Constantinople, while Phokas besieged Abydos. Basil with a picked force, including the Russians, defeated Delphinas near Chrysopolis, captured and hanged him ; and hastened by sea to relieve Abydos, accompanied by his brother, whom the greatness of the occasion brought into the field for the first and last time. The armies faced each other near Abydos, and a battle was imminent, when Phokas suddenly fell dead from his horse, probably from a stroke of apoplexy. His army dispersed or surrendered, and the revolt was at an end (April 23, 989).

Bardas Skleros was now at liberty, but he was old, in ill-health and half blind, and was ready to lay down his arms. His son Romanus was in high favour with Basil, who offered the aged warrior free pardon, the restoration of his property, and the rank of Curopalates ; and Skleros came in and submitted. Basil was astonished at his infirmity. 'But,' he added, 'we trembled at this invalid yesterday.' There was a momentary hitch at the strange meeting, for Skleros wore purple boots, and Basil refused to speak until they were changed. He then gave the old warrior a gracious welcome, and bade him be seated. Skleros did not long survive, but during the remainder of his life assisted his sovereign by every means in his power.

About this time the Emperor dismissed Basil

Lecapenos from all his positions, confiscated his entire property, and banished him; and so ended the long period of Lecapenian influence in Eastern Roman history, which had endured for seventy years (919-989).

In 990 Basil visited Thessalonica, and placed there a large garrison under Gregory of Taron to observe Samuel and check his ravages. Next year he entered Armenia, where homage was paid to him by the assembled dynasts of the Caucasus region. Iberia had been ceded to him by the will of its King David, but Basil preferred to recognize the dead prince's brother Gourgen as sovereign. He annexed the fortresses on Lake Van, and left Roman influence thoroughly established right up to and beyond the great mountain chain.

For two years thereafter he was busy at home. The civil wars, despite the humanity which characterized them, had caused much harm. Basil strove to repair it; but the steady decline in the agricultural class he could not check. In 996 he issued another Novel, and, finding it evaded by the great landowners, proceeded to tax them heavily, and made them responsible for deficits in their poorer neighbours' payments. He was perhaps wrong; it may be that taxation of the rich recoils upon the poor—though in that case it can only be said that human society, as at present organized, is an inverted pyramid sustained by injustice—but it is impossible to withhold admiration from this brave idealist, who believed that the duty of government is to protect the poor, and one wonders with grim amusement how many

Bonfils.

THE WALLS OF ANTIOCH.

The wall follows the crest of the mountain ridge, on which was the Citadel of Seleucus. The city lay in the plain. Antioch, now a mere village, was, about A.D. 500, the second city of the Roman Empire, perhaps as large as Constantinople.

present-day politicians would venture to practise the doctrine.

In 994 the imperial army in the East was defeated on the Orontes, and next year Basil took command and swept through Syria in a brilliant raid, which reduced the frontier Emirates again to submission, though Aleppo soon fell under Fatimid domination.

Meanwhile Gregory of Taron had been slain, and Samuel seized the opportunity to invade Greece in 996. Basil, busy at the capital, sent Nicephorus Ouranos to take command at Thessalonica. Samuel ravaged Phokis, Bœotia, and Attica, but could take no fortified town, and turned back; Ouranos, pressing through Thessaly, reached Lamia just as the Bulgarian king came through Thermopylæ from the south. The flooded Sperchius separated the armies, but Ouranos crossed it in the night, and attacked the Bulgarians in their camp, utterly defeating them, and all but capturing Samuel. Durazzo was next restored to the Empire by its governor, Ashot, son of Gregory of Taron, to whom Samuel had entrusted the place, though he was a recently-taken prisoner, in the hope of conciliating him. It is probable that Samuel's intrigues had something to do with the recurring revolts in Italy, but the loss of Durazzo crippled him for mischief there, and the Katepans not only coped successfully with internal troubles, but conquered the northern district of Apulia, which received the designation of 'Katepanata' (about 1000).

In 1000 Basil had thoroughly put his house in order, and prepared to deal with Samuel. General

Theodorocanos entered East Bulgaria, and conquered it without difficulty, taking Old and New Presthlava and Pliscova. Next year Basil took command at Thessalonica, and captured Berrhœa, Vodena, and Servia. In 1002 he crossed the Balkans, overran Western Bulgaria, and besieged Vidin. Samuel, after vain attempts to raise the siege, invaded Thrace, carrying desolation to the gates of Adrianople. But Vidin had already surrendered; and Basil, hurrying from the north, came up with Samuel in retreat at Skoupies, and completely defeated him, capturing all his baggage and recovering the plunder and captives. Skoupies was surrendered by Romanus, son of Peter of Bulgaria, but the hill-fortress of Pernik held out under its chief, Kruka, and Basil failed to take it.

The details of the years 1003 to 1013 are most obscure, and cannot be traced. All that seems clear is that every year Basil took the field, and proceeded steadily with the work of conquest. The rugged country was studded with strong hill-forts, the reduction of which cost an immense amount of time and labour; but the task was stubbornly carried through. By 1014 Samuel was hemmed into a region roughly corresponding to the present vilayets of Monastir and Kossovo, and Basil was ready to strike the final blow.

During these years there had been troubles both in East and West. The Caucasian princes were uneasy dependents, and Basil had to watch them carefully. His brother-in-law, Vladimir of Russia, was a faithful ally, and a large body of Russians served in the imperial army, but in Italy signs of

disaffection were apparent. There had been always much discontent with the heretic 'Greek' rule, and in 1010 Melus, a citizen of Bari, headed a rising. It was put down by the Katepan Basil Mesardomites, but Melus escaped, to give much trouble thereafter.

In the summer of 1014 Basil marched from Thessalonica against Samuel, who was entrenched at Bielasicia, near Strumicia, in the pass now called Demir Kapu. Basil judged the position too strong to be forced, and sent Nicephorus Xiphias with a strong column to make a wide turning movement on the south. Xiphias, after a toilsome march, reached the Bulgarian right rear on July 29, and the Emperor ordered the advance. The Byzantine army closed in from both sides upon its outgeneralled opponents; the positions were stormed, and Samuel fled for his life to Prilep, under cover of a gallant stand made by his son, Gabriel Roman. 15,000 prisoners were taken, upon whom Basil, exasperated by the long war and the mischief wrought by Samuel's raids, wreaked his vengeance in horrible fashion. He blinded them all, leaving one man in every hundred one eye, that he might guide, and sent the hideous column to Samuel. We can only hope that the ghastly story is exaggerated; but whether true or only partly so, it has sufficed to damn Basil's reputation for all time. Nor did it have any effect in intimidating the Slavs. Samuel indeed died of grief and rage, but Gabriel Roman took command, and his followers were roused to furious resistance; for a time the struggle assumed a national character. Basil gained

little more by his great victory than the command of the neighbourhood. Theophylaktos Botaniates, Governor of Thessalonica, was defeated and slain on Mount Strumicia, and the Emperor retired to Mosynopolis; but on hearing of Samuel's death he again advanced and captured Prilep and Stobi. He was either ashamed of his cruelty or felt it to be useless, for he acted with the greatest humanity.

Early in 1015 Vodena revolted, and Basil had to retake it. He deported many of its Slavonic inhabitants, replacing them by Greeks, and occupied and fortified the defiles to the west. He then captured Moglena, and deported its inhabitants to Armenia. At this juncture Gabriel Roman was assassinated by his cousin Vladislav. The latter sued for peace; but Basil refused all terms, and wasted Pelagonia nearly to the gates of Ochrida.

In January, 1016, a joint expedition of Roman and Russian troops conquered the Tauridan inland, still known as Khazaria from its old possessors. Then Basil hastened to the East. Sennacherib, King of Vasparukan, a state about Lake Van, hard-pressed by the Turks, had ceded his dominions in return for great estates near Sebaste. Many of the people migrated with their sovereign; Basil partially replaced them by Slavs, and, having organized the new province, returned to Macedonia, though the season was far advanced. He lost eighty-eight days in besieging Pernik, and finally retired to Mosynopolis.

In 1017 Vladislav endeavoured to subsidize the Pechenegs to attack the Empire, but in vain; Basil ranged up and down the kingdom of Ochrida,

wasting all Slav estates pitilessly, and capturing the royal granaries at Setania. Vladislav dared not attack except at great advantage, and at last had his chance. He broke into the imperial line of march, and cut off a portion of the column. Basil, who was resting, sprang on his horse and rushed to the point of danger, sending orders for all the divisions to support. Charging into the Bulgarian masses with his guards, he extricated the endangered troops, the terror of his name clearing a way for them; the corps commanders reached the field from every side, took the offensive, and swept before them in rout and ruin the last army that Ochrida could array.

Vladislav, in desperation, strove to open communications with Italy by seizing Durazzo, but was repelled and slain; and when in 1018 Basil reached the front, resistance was at an end. Vladislav's widow offered submission. Kruka of Pernik and Dragomuzh of Strumicia surrendered, and were immediately created patricians. Basil marched thence to Skoupies, and so southward, chiefs and people submitting on every side, and entered Ochrida in triumph. He divided Samuel's treasures among his well-deserving troops, and behaved with great generosity to the survivors of the Shishmanid family.

No alteration was made in the administration organized by Samuel for the cultivators; everything was done to conciliate chiefs and people. Servia now came under the direct control of the Empire; Belgrade and Sirmium were garrisoned, and a division of troops marched through the Dalmatian

inland. The arduous struggle had ended in the complete establishment of the imperial authority in Balkania.

In 1019 Basil made a progress through his conquests and Greece to Athens, where no Emperor had been seen for nearly four centuries. The old-world glories of the city made a deep impression upon his stern and perhaps confined but lofty soul. He made splendid gifts to the city and the Church of the Virgin, once the Temple of Athene, and returned to Constantinople, which he entered in a magnificent triumph.

In Italy, Melus in 1017 had enlisted a band of Normans, and with them and an army of Italian malcontents twice defeated the imperial troops. Basil at once appointed as Katepan Basil Boyannes, who in 1018 crushed the invaders at Cannae. Melus escaped, but died in 1020, and under the new Katepan imperial rule was greatly strengthened. The day of Italian separation was not yet.

Then, in 1021, Basil proceeded to Armenia, where a coalition of Caucasian dynasts had been formed against further Roman extension. He was detained by a final outbreak of aristocratic turbulence under the distinguished general Nicephorus Xiphias and Nicephorus Phokas, son of Bardas. Phokas was slain by Sennacherib of Sebaste; Xiphias surrendered and was pardoned, and Basil was able to devote his attention to the East. He gained a great victory over the allies in Armenia, and wintered in Colchis, reorganizing that region; and next year he again took the field, ravaged Abasgia, and shattered the coalition in a final splendid victory on September 11.

A general submission followed; Sembat, King of Ani, covenated to cede his dominions at his death. Basil annexed certain districts, strengthened the frontier fortresses, and displayed his position as Protector of Armenia by a raid into Persia.

In 1024 he returned to Constantinople, but old as he was, and though he had made thirty campaigns, he was still full of energy, and began to organize a great expedition for the reconquest of Sicily. The attack was planned for the spring of 1026, but in December, 1025, the old warrior sickened and died, aged sixty-eight, after a glorious reign of sixty-two years. To his warrior guardians he owed much, but the success of his later years was all his own. He left the Empire secure on every hand, supreme from the head of the Adriatic to the Caucasus. So careful had he been of the interests of his people that he had levied no direct taxes for two years; and yet, though all his life he had been at war, he left a treasury reserve of 200,000 pounds of gold (over £9,000,000). His one terrible mistake has been noted, as has his one shocking, but not incomprehensible, crime. He rose to the height of his idealistic position as Protector of the Poor; no man ever waged single-handed a finer fight against vested selfishness. He stood utterly alone; even Leo III. is not so solitary a figure; we can appreciate his greatness only by remembering that alone, self-taught, unaided, he swept every opponent within and without from his path. There were still to be worthy and able rulers of the State; for forty years yet the Empire was to endure unbroken; for more than a century afterwards it was to stand

apparently strong and splendid; but there was never to be again a warrior-statesman like Basil II. It was in keeping with his lonely splendour that he was laid to rest, not with his ancestors in the church of The Holy Apostles, but in the shrine of The Evangelists in the Hebdomon; and with him in his solitary tomb were buried the best hopes and ideals of the Roman Empire in the East.

EASTERN EMPIRE, 1025.
Direct Rule
Indirect Rule & Influence
(Outlined thus)
WESTERN EMPIRE
RUSSIA
PECHENEGS
HUNGARY
ALANIA
EUXINE
ABASGIA
IBERIA
KARS
ANI
CORSICA
SARDINIA
SICILY
KM OF KAIRWAN
CRETE
CYPRUS
CROATIA
SERVIA
SIRMIUM
DALMATIA
DYRRHACHIUM
BULGARIA
MACEDONIA
THRACE
PARISTRIA
THESSALONICA
HELLAS
NICOPOLIS
PELOPONNESUS
CONSTANTINOPLE
Chalcedon
Nicomedia
Nicaea
Prusa
Dorylaeum
Ancyra
Amorium
Caesarea
Iconium
Tyana
Tarsus
Cilicia
Antioch
Aleppo
Damascus
Tripolis
Kibyra
Attalia
Rhodes
Ephesus
Samos
Smyrna
Sardes
Pergamos
Chios
Lesbos
Lemnos
Larissa
Athens
Patras
Corinth
Monemvasia
Corcyra
Nicopolis
Leucas
Cephallenia
Zacynthos
Tarento
Otranto
Bari
Dyrrhachium
Salerno
Amalfi
Naples
Gaeta
Rome
Spalatro
Regusa
Venice
Sirmium
Belgrade
Vidin
Nisch
Sardica
Skoupes
Adrianople
Mesembria
Prestlava
Silistria
Little Presthlava
Cherson
KHAZARIA
CHERSON
Sarkel
Phasis
Trebizond
Sinope
Amisus
Amasea
Sebaste
Theodosiopolis
Mandzikert
Taron
Bitlis
Mesopotamia
Miarfakan
Diyarbekr
Edessa
Mosul
Aleppo
Damascus
BAGHDAD
ABBASID KHALIFATE
Rhodes
Cyprus
Tripolis
Kars
Ani

CHAPTER XV

THE AGE OF WOMEN

Sole rule of Constantine IX.—Mistakes and financial oppression—Zoe and her husbands—Romanus III.—Continued expansion in spite of decay at centre—Michael IV.—Financial oppression—Temporary recovery, and loss of Sicily—Revolt of Servia—Rebellions—Michael V.—Constantine X.—Repulse of Russians, Uzes, etc.—Internal decay—Appearance of Seljuks—Acquisitions in Armenia—Character of Constantine X.—Theodora.

BASIL'S successor was his brother Constantine IX., who had been his nominal colleague throughout his reign, but whose single appearance in public life had been at Abydos in 989. He was a man of fine presence, strong and stately despite his sixty-three years; but his character had been spoilt by the purposeless life from which his masterful brother had broken loose, and he had no tastes except for pomp and pleasure. He created his household eunuchs ministers, and the natural consequence was much misgovernment. All arrears of taxes were rigidly exacted; during his short reign Constantine raised and expended the revenue of five, the outgo being mainly on pleasure. Many nobles and officials were disgraced for trivial faults, though it is probable that the sentences of blinding,

which were freely dealt about, were mostly nominal. The general discontent was great. There is no reason for believing that Constantine was intentionally cruel or tyrannical; he was merely indolent and ignorant, and his eunuch ministers were to blame for most of the acts which made him unpopular.

In 1027 the Pechenegs, attempting to profit by the accession of a weak monarch, invaded Bulgaria, but they were repelled by Constantine Diogenes, one of the most distinguished of the lieutenants of Basil II. A Saracen fleet entered the Ægean and began to plunder the Cyclades, but it was defeated by the provincial squadrons of Samos and Chios.

In November, 1028, Constantine fell ill. He had three daughters, but of these one was a professed nun. There remained Zoe, aged forty-eight, a vain voluptuary; and Theodora, a year younger, a woman of very different stamp, severely chaste and devout. Both were unmarried, and the dying Emperor proposed to wed Theodora to some great noble, and name her his successor. He finally fixed on Romanus Argyros, in preference to Constantine Dalassenos, who was feared by the Court eunuchs for his stern ideas of duty. He ordered Argyros to divorce his wife, and quickened his decision by threats of blinding. The lady saved her husband by a voluntary separation, and entered a nunnery; the act deserves remembrance. Theodora, however, stubbornly refused to marry under such conditions, and Constantine, who was near his end, fearing to waste time, united Zoe to Argyros. On November 21 he died.

For the next thirty years the Empire was ruled

by Zoe's husbands. The Empress resembled Elizabeth of England on one side of her character, but had little of her practical ability, and regarded the possession of the throne merely as affording opportunities for pleasure. Romanus III. was an estimable gentleman of sixty, somewhat vain, but learned and not devoid of talent. He celebrated his accession by releasing all debtors from confinement, and remitted arrears of taxation, while he discharged the private obligations of the released prisoners. He ransomed unredeemed captives from the Pechenegs, and pardoned the victims of his predecessor's injustice. Other measures were less well advised; large gifts were made to the Church, which was already far too wealthy; and the mutual responsibility of the rich for the taxes of the poor in the provinces was abolished. The step was not, perhaps, an unjust one—the law had been enforced with extreme severity by Basil II.—but it marked the withdrawal of the head of the State from the position of Protector of the Poor. Romanus naturally sympathized with his order; the long struggle between Emperor and nobility had practically ended in the victory of the latter; legislation for the benefit of the masses ceased; feudal characteristics, which were already too apparent, became more and more pronounced.

The reign of Romanus III. and Zoe was disturbed by some conspiracies. Theodora was disliked by both, and they eventually succeeded in forcing her into a nunnery, on the ground that she had been implicated in one of the plots against her sister. The distinguished general Constantine Diogenes

was another victim; he killed himself to escape public execution.

In 1030 Romanus took command in Syria against the Emirs of Aleppo and Tripolis. He had no military experience, and a trifling reverse near Aleppo led to a wild and panic-stricken retreat to Antioch, during which the flying army lost almost all its baggage. The Emperor, cured of his desire for military glory, returned to Constantinople. His officers had better success. Antioch was defended, the Emir of Tripoli gained over. George Maniakes, Governor of Teluch (in North Syria), won a brilliant little success over the enemy, retaking great part of the baggage lost by the Emperor, and was appointed General of Lower Media (about Samosata). In 1032 he captured Edessa, which now became a permanent possession of the Empire. Aleppo again became tributary. The important fortress of Perkrin on the Persarmenian border was also gained.

In 1031 an Afro-Sicilian fleet raided the Dalmatian coast, but was completely defeated. A second naval raid in 1032 was also defeated, and in 1033 the imperial fleet, under Tekneas, retaliated by a foray on the Egyptian coast. In Italy matters did not go so well; the restless Norman adventurers had learned the way to the south, and in 1030 they established themselves at Aversa.

Internally the condition of the Empire was not satisfactory. Asia Minor suffered from an outbreak of plague; there were also some severe shocks of earthquake; and a famine which followed on these calamities produced such distress that the starving peasantry were driven to enslave themselves and

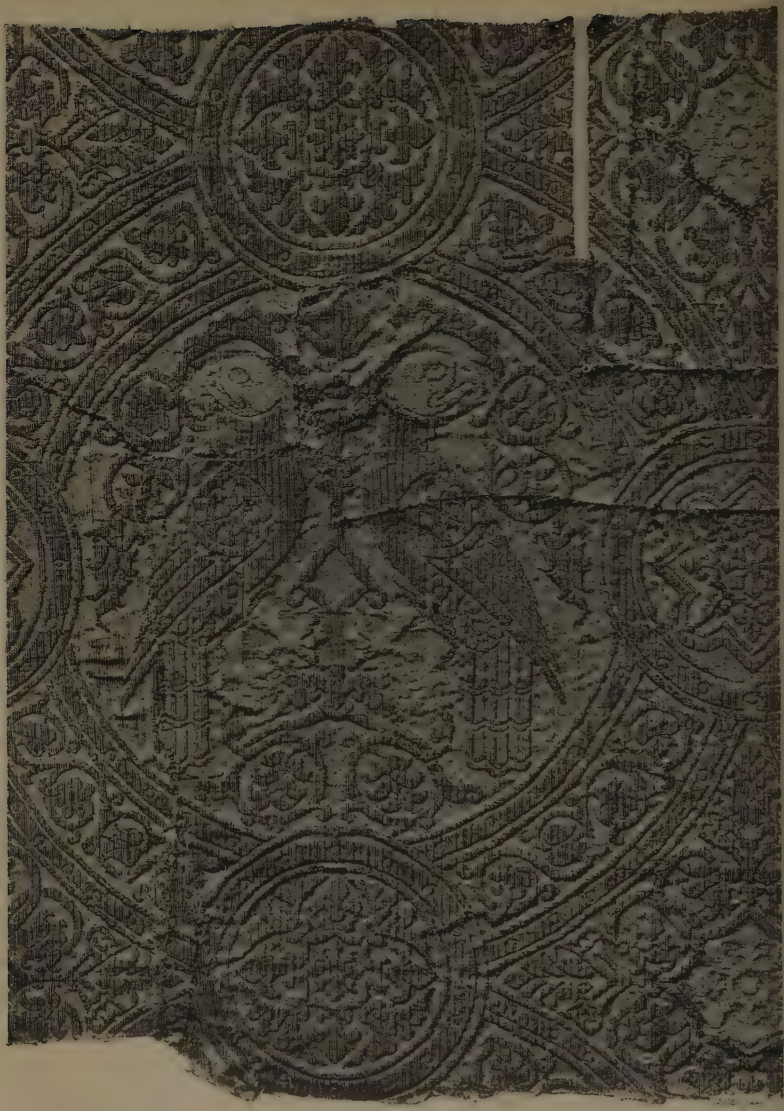
their children. The economic consequences were disastrous, and though outwardly the Empire was as imposing as ever, its strength was beginning to fail.

Romanus III. died on April 11, 1034, and Zoe, almost before the breath had left his body, married her handsome chamberlain, Michael the Paphlagonian, and proclaimed him Emperor.

Michael was a young man, probably not more than thirty; he had commenced life as a money-changer, and had obtained his post of chamberlain by the interest of his brother John, a eunuch of the household of Romanus III.; he was exceedingly handsome in person, but was epileptic. He was an able man, and otherwise seems to have been estimable, though he is accused of having carried on an intrigue with Zoe during the life of her husband. John he created Orphanotrophos — minister of charitable institutions—and the latter became his prime minister for all purposes. Three other brothers, Constantine, George, and Niketas, were promoted to high office, as was Stephen, a ship-builder, the husband of the Emperor's sister Maria. The military nobles muttered angrily at being ruled by this family of low-born upstarts—though time had been when birth had been utterly disregarded as a qualification for the throne of the Roman Empire—they called them 'Caulkers,' an illusion to the trade of Maria's husband. Greedy the Paphlagonians certainly were; like all parvenus, they were intent on filling their pockets, though it does not appear that they were guilty of deliberate extortion. The fiscal administration was severe,

but the surtax on land of from 4 to 20 nomismata looks like a deliberate return to the policy of Basil II., of endeavouring to force the rich to pay their due share of the public burdens. But oppression there undoubtedly was, and for the first time we hear of riots against the collectors of the revenue. The increasing misery among the peasantry struck the Emperor's sister so much that she appealed for them to the Orphanotrophos, but without effect, and to the end of the Empire's political existence their condition merely went from bad to worse, until the time came when the great fabric was a mere shell without a kernel, its heart eaten away by misgovernment and exaction.

It does not appear that Michael was personally to blame for the evils of his times. He was probably more or less misled and misinformed by his interested brothers. It may appear strange that, being, like Basil I., sprung from the people, he had not a better perception of their miseries; but it must be remembered that Basil I. was a peasant, while Michael IV. was of the trading 'middle class, which as a general rule has little sympathy for the 'masses.' Where Michael could exert himself he showed energy and insight; he cleared the Court of the eunuchs of Constantine IX., and though his treatment of Constantine Dalassenos, whom he imprisoned on a somewhat improbable charge, may have been unjustified, this cannot be said of his spoliation of Theophanes, the avaricious Archbishop of Thessalonica, who when his diocese was suffering from famine had 3,300 pounds of gold (£150,000) in his coffers.



BYZANTINE BROCADE OF SILK AND GOLD THREAD OF THE NINTH OR TENTH CENTURY.

From the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Last Efforts of Empire in Sicily

In 1034 a Saracen pirate fleet raided the Cyclades and Lycia. Myra was plundered, but in 1035 a second raid was entirely defeated, the prisoners being executed. In 1038 the Emperor's brother Constantine defeated an attempt to retake Edessa. In the same year Michael appointed George Maniakes Governor of Italy, and ordered him to invade Sicily, where the Mohammedans were distracted by a quarrel between two brothers for the possession of the Emirate. Michael made a mistake, though a natural one, in appointing his brother-in-law Stephen admiral of the fleet. The proud aristocratic general and the low-born admiral soon quarrelled, but at first all went well. Messina was stormed, an African army defeated at Rametta, and the eastern half of the island subdued during 1039. In 1040 another African army was completely defeated, but succeeded in escaping by sea. Maniakes blamed the admiral, whose fault it really seems to have been, stormed at and struck him. Not unnaturally, he was superseded and imprisoned. Under Stephen the Moslems rapidly regained all the ground that they had lost, and by 1041 the Empire held only the district about Messina, which was gallantly defended by the general Katakalon.

In 1040 Servia revolted under Stephen Bogislav; it would appear that the rebellion was largely due to the endeavour of John the Orphanotrophos to establish direct rule over the country. An army under George Provatas, sent by Michael, was defeated, and Servia gained and maintained its independence.

The loss of Servia was a blow to the pride of the

Empire rather than a serious loss; as it was, it would not have been acquiesced in had Michael IV. lived. But its immediate consequences were very serious, for the Bulgarians and Slavs of the old kingdom of Ochrida rose in revolt under Peter Delyan. Again the Orphanotrophos, who had endeavoured to substitute a money tax for the present payments in kind, was responsible. Delyan gained possession of many towns, and murdered all the Greeks who fell into his hands. He was joined by several Bulgarian officers in the imperial service, including Alusian, brother of Vladislav, the last King of Ochrida. There were dissensions among the various rebel leaders, but they captured Durazzo and invaded Greece, which they overran to the Gulf of Corinth, defeating the inhabitants of the wealthy manufacturing city of Thebes, who took arms to resist them. An attack on Thessalonica was, however, completely defeated. Alusian then intrigued against Delyan, ousted and blinded him; but he had no confidence in his ability to resist the Empire, and surrendered to Michael, who pardoned him.

Michael was now slowly dying of dropsy, while his fits of epilepsy were of rapid recurrence; but he rose above his maladies, and made desperate efforts to suppress the revolt before the end which he expected should come. He assembled a great army at Thessalonica, and took command in person, though so weak that he had to be strapped to the saddle. Every evening he was taken from his horse apparently at the point of death, but difficulty and danger disappeared before his dying energy.

He pushed on, recapturing towns and recovering the lost districts. The rebel army was defeated and destroyed in detail; Delyan was taken prisoner; in a few months Macedonia, Epirus, and Greece had been entirely recovered; and the Emperor, who had at least made a noble attempt to retrieve misfortunes for which he was hardly responsible, returned to Constantinople to die, December 10, 1041.

Zoe decided not to marry again, but to crown as her colleague Michael, son of Stephen the 'Caulker.' He had not been trusted by Michael IV., though he bore the title of Cæsar, and Zoe showed little wisdom in her choice. She required him to banish his uncles; but so soon as he was crowned he recalled them, placed all his confidence in Constantine, to the neglect of John, who had hitherto been all-powerful, and had the baseness and ingratitude to depose his benefactress and force her into a nunnery. At once the people rose in revolt. When the point at issue was plain, they were always ready to assert their rights. 'Down with the Caulker!' was the cry, and the rioters marched upon the palace and stormed it after a furious struggle with the guards and the households of the Emperor and his uncle. Zoe was restored, but, much to her disgust, the people—the supposedly servile and helpless Byzantine populace—insisted that her ill-used sister Theodora should be co-Empress. She unwillingly consented; she was not anxious to press hardly upon the ill-conditioned boy who had dethroned her, but the people were not so placable. Michael and Constantine were blinded and immured

in monasteries; it can hardly be said that the punishment was ill-deserved; Constantine's peculations from the treasury alone amounted to 5,300 pounds of gold (£240,000).

Zoe, jealous of her sister and anxious to thrust her again into the background, now made a third marriage, at the age of sixty-two. Her choice was Constantine Monomachos, an old admirer, who had been exiled to Mitylene by Michael IV. His exile had been consoled by the company of a charming widow of the family of Skleros, granddaughter of the famous Bardas; and he made the extraordinary condition that he should not, on marrying Zoe, abandon the faithful companion of his adversity. 'Skleraina,' as the lady was usually called, was installed as Augusta in the palace, and she was soon on excellent terms with Zoe, whom she knew how to manage, while her beauty and natural amiability, as well as her wit and grace, made her a general favourite with the lax courtiers. The people were of a different mind; they saw the concubine's equivocal position and loose morals rather than her grace and beauty; and at the feast of the Forty Martyrs in 1043 Constantine was attacked by the mob, who yelled, 'Down with Skleraina!' and had to be pacified by Zoe and Theodora.

Though a debauchee, Constantine X. was by no means an unamiable one; he was extremely good-natured. His life had been one of vicissitude, and he regarded the throne as a secure refuge from his troubles. He was a liberal patron of art and literature; and while he wasted much money on pleasure,

is to be remembered to his credit that he also expended large sums in the construction and endowment of almshouses and hospitals. He was a martyr to gout, which does not however appear to have spoilt his kindly temper. He may perhaps be compared with Charles II. of England; he probably lacked the unscrupulous ability and readiness of that monarch, but was hardly so bad from the moral point of view. It would be a grave mistake to regard him with contempt; we shall soon have occasion to see the extreme precariousness of his position; the man who held his own against plots and open revolt, and died on the throne after the death of the wife who appeared to be his only stay, cannot have been devoid of capacity.

One act of the short reign of Zoe with Theodora had been the release of George Maniakes, and his appointment to the command in Italy, where the Normans and Italian malcontents were making great progress under Argyrus, son of their old leader Melus. Maniakes defeated them near Monopoli in Apulia, but when he heard that the paramour of the sister of his personal enemy Romanus Skleros had become Emperor, he proceeded to make overtures to the Normans, called them to his standard, and landed at Durazzo in February, 1043, to contest the crown with Constantine. He was slain in battle near Ostrovo, and his mercenaries took service with the Emperor. Another dangerous enemy was Stephen Bogislav, King of Servia, who invaded Illyria, and repulsed a counter-invasion of Servia carried out by the imperial troops in the West.

In 1043 the capital was suddenly threatened by

another Russian attack. The pretext was the death of a Russian noble in a street disturbance at Constantinople. Constantine offered all reasonable reparation, but in vain; the Russians were determined on war; their kingdom was far more powerful under Yaroslav the Lawgiver than it had been under Sviatoslav, and it is clear that considerable success was expected. The expedition proceeded by sea; the fleet was now probably stronger for battle than the rude flotillas of Oleg and Igor.

Constantine had made every preparation to receive the invaders, but on their arrival off the Bosphorus he again made an offer of peace. It was rejected, and the fleet sailed out to the attack. It soon became apparent that the Russian armament was far more formidable than those of old, and the first action was indecisive; many Russian vessels were sunk, but a section of the Byzantine fleet was cut off and destroyed. A second battle had better results; the Russian armada was completely defeated, with a loss of 15,000 men. Fresh disasters by storms befell it on its retreat, and only a remnant reached Kiev. In 1046 peace was concluded, and thenceforth friendly relations were never interrupted; Russia became fast Byzantinized. Politically the country underwent a deep decline after the death of the great King Vladimir Monomakh in 1125, and had neither will nor power to attack the Empire.

In 1047 Leo Tornikios, a relative of the Emperor, raised a revolt. He was Governor of Thrace, and Constantine wished to transfer him to Armenia, where there was danger from the Turks. Tornikios considered this equivalent to disgrace, and marched

on the capital at the head of a motley gathering of troops, retainers, and armed peasants. There were hardly any troops in Constantinople: after picketing the impregnable land walls, Constantine had only ,000 men in hand, and these he directed to make a sortie by the Gate of Blachernæ. They were driven in, and the Emperor, who was watching from the gateway tower, was in great danger, the arrows of the assailants showering about him. Next day Tornikios made a rash attempt to storm the city, and was completely repulsed. Troops from Asia reached the capital, and the peril was over. Tornikios made an attack on Rhedestos, was repulsed, deserted by his followers, and taken. On Christmas Eve he was blinded. Constantine's whole life on the throne was disturbed by plots. The conspirators, with few exceptions, escaped with very mild punishment; the good-natured Emperor's kindliness was seldom ruffled.

In 1048 the Pechenegs made another raid on Bulgaria, which was disastrously repelled, King Tyrach and great part of his army being taken prisoners. The captives were partly sent to Asia as soldiers, partly settled in Bulgaria; but the Asiatic conscripts escaped and returned to Europe, joined their countrymen, and began to waste the Danubian districts. They were joined by the king, who had been, somewhat imprudently, released by Constantine; and the troops in the vicinity were twice defeated. Energetic preparations were now made. General Nicephorus Bryennios was placed in command, and Keghen, a Pecheneg refugee who had been first employed

and then distrusted by the Emperor, was again taken into favour and directed to open negotiations. He was treacherously murdered by his countrymen, but the Pecheneg forays were curbed by the manœuvres of Bryennios, and one of their hordes destroyed at Chariopolis. In 1050 they defeated Katakalon, who was wounded and taken prisoner, but his captors had conceived a rude chivalrous respect for him, and he was carefully tended and honourably released. The Pechenegs were afterwards defeated and forced across the Danube, and they then made peace for thirty years.

In Italy the withdrawal of Maniakes left everything at the mercy of Argyrus. Constantine was inclined to favour him, and created him vassal Duke of Apulia. The step was well-advised; it was only by such means that the Italians could be kept in allegiance, but the problem was complicated by the presence of the Normans, who were not inclined to leave the country, and very ready to fight for their own hand.

Meanwhile in the East the Empire had attained its widest expansion by the cession of Ani in 1045, sorely against the will of King Gagik. A great deal has been said of the unwisdom of destroying this Christian barrier state, but it seems to the writer that Armenia was never more than what it had been in earlier Roman times—a ball tossed to and fro between two great powers. The states were full of internecine warfare, and were rarely able to maintain a good resistance against their Moslem foes. Taron and Vasparukan had been ceded by their rulers in despair of being able

to hold them. Great part of the frontier had already passed into Roman hands; the final cession of Ani was merely a question of time. Gregory of Ararat also ceded his principality; only Kars now remained independent. Gagik received extensive estates in Cappadocia.

In 1048 the Seljuk Turks under Togrul Beg attacked the Empire. This horde was originally part of a great Turkish Empire of Central Asia, with which the pre-Heracliad Emperors had corresponded. Commencing as mercenaries of Mahmúd the Ghaznevid, they eventually overthrew the Buhawids, and made themselves supreme in Persia. In 1048 a Seljuk force under Kutulmish, cousin of Togrul Beg, attacked the Byzantine tributary city of Diarbekr. It was repulsed, and, being refused permission by the Governor of Vasparukan to pass through his territory, attacked, defeated, and captured him. Togrul thereupon sent his nephew Ibrahim to invade the Empire. A vanguard of 20,000 men under Hassan the Deaf was defeated on the Stragma by Katakalon, then Governor of Ani, and Aaron the Shishmanid. On the advance of the main horde there were dissensions between the generals, Katakalon wishing to engage, while Aaron urged the necessity of awaiting the arrival of Liparit, Prince of Abasgia, who was coming up. Ibrahim thereupon slipped past his enemies and sacked the great commercial city of Arzen (Erzerúm), thereby inflicting a mortal blow on the prosperity of Armenia. The destruction and loss of life was doubtless terrible, though we can hardly credit Chamich's statement that the place contained 300,000 inhabitants. The

destruction of Arzen was the beginning of woes for Armenia, which have never ceased to this day.

Liparit arrived with 26,000 warriors, and a series of battles was fought with Ibrahim about September 18, 1048. Liparit was taken prisoner and his troops forced back; but Katakalon and Aaron disposed of the hordes opposed to them, and the Seljuks retreated into Persia. Constantine ransomed Liparit; and Togrul, not to be outdone in generosity, gave the money to Liparit on his release.

Next year Togrul himself invaded the Empire. He defeated the troops of the independent state of Kars, and captured and murdered their general, Thatoul; but he failed to take the imperial fortress of Manazkert, and then retired. His raids were quite objectless. In 1052 there were Seljuk raids; and in 1053 Togrul again invaded Armenia in person; he ravaged several districts, but took no important town, and suffered a second repulse before Manazkert.

The Empress Zoe died in 1050, at the age of seventy. Her husband survived until 1054. He proposed to nominate as his successor Nicephorus Bryennios, general of the Macedonian Theme; but the aged Theodora, who had been kept in the background for twelve years, now came forward, and was proclaimed supreme Augusta by acclamation of troops and people. The news of her triumph embittered the last days of Constantine, and perhaps hastened his end. His reign, though internally the slow decay which has been noted went on unchecked, had not been externally inglorious. The losses of the preceding reign in Europe had been offset by

gains in Armenia; and all attacks from without had been successfully beaten off.

Theodora was a woman of considerable vigour and ability; but she was seventy-four years of age, and, though conscientious and well-intentioned, was somewhat narrow-minded and vindictive. She banished Nicephorus Bryennios and confiscated his property, and also superseded Isaac Comnenos, who commanded in the East. Internally she made her father's mistake of entrusting ministerial portfolios to her household eunuchs, but on the other hand she gave close personal attention to public business, thus avoiding his worst fault. Her reign passed away quietly; the only external event was an attack by the Seljuks on Ani, which was beaten off; internally the Empire was unusually prosperous. The people regarded with chivalrous reverence and respect this last austere and upright scion of the great 'Macedonian' House which had so long guided the ship of State with profit and glory, and so, in extreme age, Theodora reigned in peace for two years. She died on August 30, 1056, and with her the imperial line, which had ruled the Empire for 190 (or 236) years, came to an end.

CHAPTER XVI

THE COMING OF THE TURKS

Michael VI.—Aristocratic revolt and triumph—Isaac I.—Constantine X.—His incapacity—The Seljuk attacks—Eudocia and Romanus IV.—Battle of Manazkert—Loss of Italy—Michael VII.—Nicephorus III.—Gradual loss of Asia Minor.

THE disorderly elements which had been sternly suppressed by Basil II., and held in check by the ill-defined but powerful influence of the daughters of Constantine IX., broke loose on the death of Theodora. She had designated as her successor the aged general Michael Stratiotikos. Theodosius Monomachos, nephew of Constantine X., endeavoured to seize the throne, but the puny revolt which he raised in the capital was put down with ridiculous ease.

The authority of Michael VI. was not upheld by an alliance with a lady of imperial blood, and he was face to face with the banded strength of the great territorial aristocracy which had grown up during the long centuries of frontier war, largely induced by it. The situation was very much what it had been under the successors of Justinian, but even more dangerous; the nobles were banded together by community of interests, and disposed of

very considerable military resources. Many of them could raise small armies from among their tenants and serfs, and a considerable part of the regular troops had feudal ties and sentiments. General Nicephorus Comnenos had been disgraced by Constantine IX. for requiring his troops to take an oath to himself personally; the circumstance shows the curious semi-independent attitude of the military magnates. It was a member of this House of Comnenos who was chosen by the nobles as Emperor. The Comnenoi do not appear very early in history; the first of whom we hear was Manuel, who defended Abydos against Bardas Skleros in 978; like most 'aristocratic' families, it would appear that they sprang from very humble beginnings.

The plans of the aristocracy were precipitated and endangered by the rashness of Nicephorus Bryennios, who revolted prematurely, and was captured and blinded. Isaac Comnenos was hastily proclaimed Augustus at Kastamon in Paphlagonia on June 8, 1057. For the moment he was in danger, having few troops about him; but he was speedily joined by the distinguished general Katakalon, with a strong force, of which he had obtained the command by forging an order. They entered Nicæa without opposition, and a spectacular but not very bloody battle was fought near by, in which Isaac gained a complete victory. On August 31 Michael VI. abdicated, and on September 2 Isaac was crowned Emperor in Hagia Sophia.

It must be said for the nobles that they had chosen a strong man, though it is, of course, possible that they did not realize so much. Once on the

throne, Isaac I. remembered that he was the Roman Emperor, and not the mere spokesman of a party, and his former associates soon became alienated. He deposed the intriguing Patriarch, Michael Keroularios, and elevated in his place Constantine Leichudes, who had been Constantine X.'s President of the Senate. The fact is worth noting; the strong Isaac I. deliberately promoted a creature of the supposedly contemptible Monomachos. He appears to have made reforms in both civil and military departments; he was, we are told, hated by all, which points to alterations which struck at personal interests everywhere. The army was over-officered; like the French army of Louis XV., it was full of young aristocrats who held commissions by virtue of birth and Court favour; Isaac deprived them all. He repelled an invasion of Magyars and Pechenegs, but in September, 1059, suddenly abdicated and retired into a monastery. He was in ill-health, but there were probably other reasons; perhaps he had already lost hope of being able to carry through reforms in face of the solid phalanx of opposition.

In his place the nobles appointed Constantine Dukas. Finlay remarks that his appointment does not reflect credit on Isaac's judgment; but probably he had little or nothing to do with it. The whole affair is clouded in mystery; we cannot even say definitely that Isaac's retirement was voluntary. At all events, Constantine XI. reversed his predecessor's policy. He was supposed to have financial ability, but his measures were characterized by sheer idiocy. It is really difficult to select a milder word. How

ar he was ruled by a jealous civilian ministry we lo not know; he must bear his share of the blame. His main idea seems to have been the formation of a treasury reserve at any cost. The method adopted was to starve the defensive services. Economy in time of peace may often be necessary and very salutary, but peace the Eastern Empire never knew. The Seljuk Turks had established themselves at Baghdad in 1056, and the whole force of their power was about to be directed against the Empire. Yet in face of this Dukas neglected the navy and reduced the army. The reductions were made on a principle not recognized except in comic opera. The spectacular officers who had been deprived by Isaac I. were restored, while the rank and file were cut down. The pay of the native troops, who for four centuries had been the backbone of the army, was reduced; the effective service was starved and ruined to serve no useful purpose. In other ways the Emperor showed his pettiness; he had an affectation for letters, and was guilty of the bad taste of declaring that he prized his knowledge of literature above his imperatorship. A literary Emperor who neglects his obvious duties is beneath contempt. In 1060 the Seljuks came through Taurus and sacked Sebaste. There were no troops to meet them, though fifty years before the raiders would not have passed the frontier. The Seljuks returned homeward unmolested, but, turning to seize a fresh success at Edessa, were gallantly repulsed.

Next year there were other raids, and in 1063 the great Sultan Alp Arslan, who had succeeded

Togrul Beg, crossed the Araxes and ravaged Georgia. Alp Arslan appears to have had definite ideas of conquest, as opposed to Togrul's mere plundering raids. The extraordinarily rapid movements of the hordes of mounted Seljuk bowmen made it extremely difficult to cope with them, even had the army been less ineffective.

On June 6, 1064, Alp Arslan stormed Ani, the Roman capital of Armenia. The strong city, whose imposing ruins are described with appreciative care by Mr. Lynch, made a fine resistance, but fell at last, chiefly because there was no field force to make a diversion in its favour. Seljuk raiding bands penetrated the eastern frontier, and rode over Mesopotamia, Melitene, Chaldia, and Koloneia, killing and pillaging with little opposition.

Constantine was as unfortunate in Europe. In 1064 Belgrade was taken by the Magyars, and next year the Tartar Uzes broke into Bulgaria, defeated such troops as could be opposed to them, and penetrated as far as Thessalonica and Tchorlu, near the capital. There, however, they were defeated and dispersed, but meanwhile the Seljuks wasted without check. The general misery was completed by an earthquake, which did much damage in Thrace and Bithynia.

Amid these misfortunes and disasters, mostly of his own making, Constantine XI. died in 1067. His wife Eudocia Makrembolitissa assumed the regency for her young son Michael VII.; constitutional custom required that she should marry; but she chose to consult inclination in preference to policy, and selected as her husband Romanus

Schah & Joaillier.

PLATE XXVI

THE MARBLE TOWER ON THE PROPONTIS.

The point of junction of the land and sea walls.

Diogenes, who had incurred the late Emperor's deep suspicion. She thereby alienated the entire powerful House of Dukas in general, and in particular Constantine's brother John, whom he had created Cæsar.

Romanus, a soldier by profession and temperament, and hampered at home by the opposition of ministers and the enmity of the Dukai, had little choice, even had the external danger been less threatening, except to take the field. His difficulties were immense. Apart from his personal limitations, he was looked upon askance by many of the military nobles, and could not count upon their cordial support. These limitations also counted for much; he was hardly a good general, being rash and impulsive, and with little power of calm judgment. The army was in the worst condition. Many of the famous themes were mere shadows, and the means were lacking to restore them; the mercenaries were insolent and mutinous; all ranks were more or less demoralized. The military administration was out of gear; equipment and transport needed renewal; worst of all, the heavy Byzantine cavalry, which for 500 years had held every enemy at bay, could ill cope with the elusive Seljuks.

The army which Romanus collected was a strange congeries of regular troops, feudal levies brought by the great Eastern nobles, and heterogeneous mercenaries. He committed a fatal error in taking the field before he could organize and reduce to order these discordant elements; the reason probably was that his uncertain position made it dangerous for him to remain inactive. Having assembled such

forces as were available, he advanced to the Taurus; but meanwhile a mass of Turkish raiders slipped past his left flank, crossed Cappadocia into Pontus, and sacked Neocæsarea. Romanus marched to intercept them with a picked force, defeated them, and recovered most of the plunder. He then marched into Syria, and fortified Membij as a frontier station; but while thus engaged another Seljuk horde swept through Cappadocia and Phrygia, sacked Amorium, and escaped. The first campaign therefore ended in very doubtful fashion, for if a Seljuk force had been defeated, two important places had been sacked; and the Turk, true to his nature, invariably massacred and destroyed; when he could not carry away captives, he murdered them. Every raid involved immense slaughter and destruction; ten years of Seljuk warfare probably completed the destruction of the free peasant population of Asia Minor, and enormously diminished the serfs. Many cities were destroyed, and those which survived, overcrowded with fugitives from the countryside, became mere dens of famine and pestilence.

In 1069 the untrustworthy nature of the army was shown by the outbreak of a dangerous mutiny among the Norman mercenaries, which had to be suppressed before the Emperor could take the field. Romanus advanced eastward in a wide front, and thus cleared wasted Cappadocia of Seljuk bands; but a horde defeated Philaretos, Duke of Antioch, and pushed into Lycaonia as far as Iconium. Romanus intercepted it as it returned through the Cilician hills; the Turks were caught, and only escaped with great loss and the abandonment of

their booty. Romanus's second campaign thus concluded with a victory, but the extreme mobility of the Turks was more than ever apparent; the Emperor's victories availed little when his enemies were raiding his communications far behind him.

Next year Romanus did not take the field in person. His difficulties at home were great; the intrigues of the Dukai were endless and persevering. In Italy the imperial authority, which Constantine X. had upheld by his wise policy of conciliation, was tottering to its fall. The Normans were now masters in the open country, and had taken between 1057 and 1070 most of the coast fortresses, including Taranto and Reggio. Only Bari held out, and in 1068 repulsed the Normans with loss; but they continued to threaten it, and it was evident that it soon must fall. Constantine XI. had done nothing for Italy; Romanus did what he could, but it was little; and meanwhile the work of his two toilsome campaigns was undone.

Romanus had left Manuel Comnenos in command in the East; he was probably, as the Emperor's nominee, ill-supported by his jealous colleagues, and was defeated and captured by Khrúdj, the Seljuk emir who commanded on the Tauric frontier; while the great Sultan Alp Arslan again invaded Armenia. He attacked and captured Manazkert and Akhlat, while Khrúdj drove through Asia Minor, ravaging and slaughtering, to Chonæ (Colossæ), which was taken and sacked in the horrible Turkish fashion. Alp Arslan meanwhile descended from Armenia upon Mesopotamia

and attacked Edessa, but here he was stoutly met and repulsed.

In 1071 Romanus once more took command; he concentrated on Sebaste, and decided in the first instance to recover Akhlat and Manazkert. The army was thoroughly discontented and in a state of suppressed mutiny; the German mercenaries were especially turbulent. Discipline was bad; confusion reigned everywhere; the ill-supplied men plundered the countryside of the little left in it by Turkish raiders; the shadow of impending disaster already lay darkly upon the doomed host.

The army was indeed large in number, perhaps 100,000 men in all — hardly more, probably less; it is quite certain that many of the themes were skeletons. The march to the shores of Lake Van seems to have been accomplished without serious trouble. Manazkert was retaken; a strong detachment under the Western adventurer Russell Balliol besieged Akhlat, covered by a second force under Tarchaniotes; all appeared to be going well, when Alp Arslan himself arrived, called in all the detached Turkish hordes, and advanced to relieve Akhlat. Romanus, on his side, sent for Russell and Tarchaniotes, but neither obeyed; they abandoned the siege of Akhlat and retreated westward; it was practically a case of desertion in face of the enemy. Next the Emperor was weakened by the desertion of his Uzic mercenaries,—a more comprehensible action, since they were naturally attracted to their Seljuk kindred — but he was none the less determined to fight. His decision has been severely criticized; quite possibly the desertions had over-

thrown his mental balance, and he had determined to stake all on a gambler's throw. Still, it must be remembered that Alp Arslan appeared disposed to venture battle, and that there was no reason to believe that in fair fight the mailed horsemen of the imperial army would not be able to break up the Seljuk host. The Sultan himself was not confident, and actually sued for peace, in spite of a trifling success which his advance-guard had gained over that of the Emperor.

Romanus haughtily informed the envoys that before terms could be discussed the Sultan must surrender his camp and retire. It was truly a case of pride before a fall, but none the less Romanus was right. Civilization, even at its last gasp, must ever remember its dignity in dealing with mere barbarism. By their works all men must be judged, and the work of the Turks gives them no claim to be regarded otherwise than as barbarians. The haughty terms were, of course, as haughtily refused, and on August 26 the great battle was fought.

Romanus placed the Eastern themes under Alyattes, General of Cappadocia, on the right, those drafted from Europe on the left; he himself was in the centre with his guards and the troops of the central provinces; while a very strong reserve, composed of the mercenaries and feudal levies, was led by Andronicus Dukas, son of the Cæsar John. The line appears to have been closely formed and deep; the Seljuks were in very loose order for the better execution of their characteristic Parthian tactics. During the earlier part of the day Romanus stood on the defensive; and the Seljuks, though

they harassed his line, could gain no advantage; but at last his scanty patience was exhausted, and he ordered the advance. The army went forward in admirable order, and began to roll the Seljuks back. The thematic horsemen were armed with the bow as well as lance and sword, and were able to reply with some effect to the Turkish arrows, but no real success was gained, as the light-armed riders would not close; on the other hand the Turks could not outflank or surround the army owing to its double-line formation. The Emperor saw at last that the continual advance was a mistake, and decided to fall back on the camp for the night. The order was not obeyed with perfect precision,—an inevitable occurrence—gaps began to appear, and the Seljuks edged into them. Thereupon Romanus ordered the front line to face about and beat off the Turks. This was done, but Dukas did not halt to support the Emperor. Either he was treacherous, or he thought the battle lost, or he could not control the noble commanders of levies and the ill-disciplined mercenaries. The writer's own opinion is that the last theory is probably nearest the truth. The reserve marched away from the field unmolested, and so home, leaving sovereign, army, and doomed Armenia, to their terrible fate.

The wings were already separated from the centre, and all was lost. Having isolated the divisions, the Seljuks surrounded them and destroyed them in detail. The wings fought well, but were broken up and mostly slaughtered, and the whole mass of savage horsemen closed round the centre. There the Emperor and his chosen troops made a splendid

resistance; but at last, well on in the night, the column was pierced through, Romanus unhorsed, wounded, and taken; and the remains of his followers, fighting to the last against overwhelming numbers, were almost all cut to pieces.

Romanus was perhaps saved by the fact that his imperial insignia were recognized by the Turks; in the morning he was dragged to the Sultan's tent that Alp Arslan might place his foot upon his neck! Yet the Sultan, having satisfied his vanity, or perhaps we should in justice say, complied with custom, treated his captive well. He offered to conclude peace on condition of receiving a ransom of 1,000,000 or 1,500,000 dinars, or nomismata, and a yearly tribute; he seems to have desired to turn his arms towards the East. Romanus perforce consented. The two gallant foes appear to have conceived a mutual liking; but Romanus, wounded and a prisoner, never forgot that he was a Roman Emperor; and when, in conversation, the Sultan asked him in what manner he would have been treated had he been captive instead of captor, he grimly replied that he would have been flogged like the robber that he was! Gibbon indulges in one of his customary slighting remarks upon this haughty bearing of a captive sovereign, but he entirely misunderstands the situation. Romanus, whatever his personal character may have been—it was not bad or contemptible—was the sovereign of a great civilized state; the Turkish Sultan, brave and just as he was, only the leader of a robber horde. This is all that can be said. Nothing is more base than to contemn estimable persons on the score

of their low material civilization, but purposeless destroyers have no claim to favourable regard.

Romanus remained only a week with his captor; he returned home to encounter a far more terrible fate at the hands of his own people. The Cæsar John had seized his opportunity, had proclaimed himself regent, and had forced the unfortunate Eudocia into a convent. Romanus made an attempt to recover his position by force, but was defeated and captured. He sent all the money in his possession to Alp Arslan, with a message of mournful magnanimity. 'Had I remained Emperor, all that I promised I would have performed. I am now but a betrayed prisoner, but I send thee all that I possess.' This Byzantine gentleman evidently thought it his honourable duty to keep faith even with a robber chief; it is one more of those incidents which remind us that the Eastern Romans were far from degenerate weaklings. John could not allow Romanus to live. The hapless Emperor was blinded in such brutal fashion that he died; and so in ruin and horror ended the career of a man who, in courage and energy at least, had been no unworthy wearer of the purple.

It is curious that the Seljuks for some years after Manazkert left Asia Minor almost alone. Alp Arslan died in 1073, and the Seljuk Empire was broken up into many conflicting Emirates. This, however, was of little benefit to the Empire. Russell Balliol revolted in Asia Minor, defeated and captured the Cæsar John, and all but set up an independent principality. To put him down, the young Michael VII. enlisted Seljuk mercenaries.

He was eventually defeated and captured by a young general, Alexius Comnenos, whom we shall soon have occasion to note, but peace did not follow. There was a revolt in Bulgaria, fresh civil broils in Asia Minor; while plague and famine wasted the provinces. Michael VII. was a more contemptible Constantine XI.; he seems to have learned under the tuition of the littérateur Psellos all that could unfit him for his duties. He spent his reign shut up in his palace, occupied with frivolous pursuits; even his nickname of the 'Peck-filcher,' given because the administration, during a famine, sold only three pecks of wheat to the bushel, was probably not personally merited; he counted for nothing. In 1077 there was still an imperial army about Edessa; it was defeated and driven westward by the Seljuks. Asia Minor was already full of them; the interior was probably so deserted owing to the disappearance of the free-holding cultivators and the ravages of war that the intruders were before long in a majority in provinces which had once been the main strength of the State. Their progress was assisted by the fact that in central Asia Minor the towns were few, and they were glad enough to pay tribute to escape sack. Of the details of this momentous occupation, which went on quietly, and perhaps sometimes imperceptibly, for twenty years, we know hardly anything. There was little concerted opposition; the remains of the Byzantine army were engaged in civil wars; but doubtless there was plenty of purposeless havoc and destruction. The net result was that by 1081 the Seljuks were established on the central plateau, and that many cities paid tribute

to them. Cilicia was full of Armenians who had migrated from their desolate homes, and were forming a kingdom among the Taurus Mountains; in the north-east a dynasty called that of Danishmend —'the Schoolmaster'—had arisen. It owed a very slight allegiance to the Grand Sultan of the Seljuks; the Pontic provinces still held by the Empire.

In 1078 Michael VII. was deposed by a revolt headed by Nicephorus Botaniates, who thereupon succeeded to the throne. Nicephorus III. had been a brilliant warrior, but he was now old, and had no energy except for debauchery. His principal stay was the young general Alexius Comnenos. Nicephorus Bryennios, General of Macedonia, revolted; Comnenos routed him at Kalavrya, and also defeated another rebel, Basilakes; but his very success made him an object of terror to his master. Meanwhile in Asia Minor Nicephorus Melissenos gave up Nicæa to the Seljuks; internally the distress and disorder continued to increase, and Nicephorus debased the coinage to meet his needs. Comnenos now married Irene Dukas, great-niece of Constantine XI. The Emperor took alarm, and Comnenos, with a motley army of regulars, mercenaries, retainers, and volunteers, marched on the capital. The gates were opened to his adherent, George Palæologos, on April 1, 1081, and Comnenos, after slight opposition, was proclaimed Emperor as Alexius I. Nicephorus III. retired into a monastery. Alexius was unable to restrain his motley horde of followers, and there was a great deal of pillage and outrage. For the first time for many centuries the great capital tasted a little of the horrors of war.

CHAPTER XVII

THE COMNENOI—THE LAST GREAT RALLY

Alexius I.—Wrecked condition of Empire—Norman invasion—Fifteen years of foreign war and rebellion—The Crusades—Alexius 'the Jackal' recovers Western Asia Minor—Final repulse of Normans under Bohemund—Death of Alexius—His character and work—John II.—His wise administration, conquests in Asia, and death—His fine character—Estimate of his work—Manuel I.—A Byzantine Cœur-de-Lion—Purposeless but brilliant wars—Internal decay and disorder—Alexius II.—Andronicus I.—Determined attempt at reform thwarted by deposition and murder.

ALEXIUS I. was now about thirty-three years of age, a short, somewhat insignificant-looking man, with an inclination to corpulence, troubled also with a slight hesitation in his speech. He had already acquired great reputation as a general, especially by his clever defeat of Bryennios at Kalavrya. Otherwise little was known of him. He was destined to do much for the broken Empire, and by his curious limitations of character was to leave much undone.

The external situation of the Empire in 1081 was as bad as it well could be. The whole of the provinces east of Hellespont were in the hands of the Turks, with the exception of a few isolated

fragments. The Balkan provinces were in disorder and more or less disaffected. In Italy the Normans had completed the conquest of the imperial possessions, and their great chief, Robert Guiscard, was preparing to invade the Empire. The general situation was not, perhaps, outwardly worse than it had been in 717, but actually it was much more serious. Leo III. had a large and vigorous peasant population with which to work in his task of regeneration; in 1081 the peasantry of Asia had disappeared, and those of Europe were mostly aliens or semi-aliens of recent conquest, entirely devoid of sympathy for the Empire which had absorbed them. Leo had had to combat and dominate a powerful bureaucracy, but Alexius was surrounded by an overshadowing territorial aristocracy as well. The army was a mere wreck; its only really effective corps were the famous Foreign, or, as it was now styled, Varangian, Guard, which since the Norman Conquest of England had been recruited by a strong draft of sturdy Englishmen, and a force of 10,000 'Immortals' which Alexius had formed a few years before. The navy had been neglected for many years; the imperial fleet was almost non-existent; the provincial squadrons had decayed owing to the disorganization of the Asiatic coast themes by Turkish irruptions. Meanwhile the trading cities of Italy, whose strength had been steadily increasing during the previous century, had built considerable fleets. Pisa, Genoa, Amalfi, and, above all, Venice, possessed large naval resources, and Robert Guiscard, assisted by the South-Italian ports, was also building up a navy. Venice was still

nominally part of the Empire, and came to the support of Alexius; but its allegiance was very precarious, and had to be secured by the donation of commercial privileges which were harmful to the prosperity of the Empire. In any case the imperial position at sea was bad; it depended upon external aid; the thalassocracy of New Rome was at an end.

The personality of Alexius counted for much; Professor Oman distinguishes him from Leo III. by describing the latter as a hero, while Alexius was only a statesman. Heroism is not incompatible with statesmanship; Leo was even more of a statesman than a warrior. Alexius was not devoid of heroic qualities; on one side of him he was a good type of the Byzantine warrior noble, a fine tactician and a gallant fighter. He was resolute and persevering, and ill-success never daunted him. His fertility of resource was remarkable, and not less so his power of turning an opportunity to good account. But with all this, he was not a statesman of a high order. He was the author of no great scheme of reform; his statesmanship was limited to devising means of coping with each emergency as it arose. His most successful stroke of policy, which had far-reaching and highly successful results, was his appeal for help to the West; but here we shall see that his over-caution prevented him from fully profiting by the successes of the Crusaders. It must be remembered that the times were against him, and that in spite of all he succeeded in preserving the Empire, and in strengthening it so that it endured for another century; but though he did much, he might have done more.

For the present he had much ado to maintain himself in Europe. In June, 1081, Robert Guiscard took Corfu, and landed in Epirus with 30,000 men. He forthwith laid siege to Durazzo, which was gallantly defended by George Palæologos. Alexius made desperate exertions. He made a truce with Suleiman, Sultan of the Seljuks of Asia Minor, leaving him in possession of nearly the entire peninsula, and obtained a body of horse-bowmen for his army. He sent the—according to European notions—enormous sum of 144,000 nomismata to the Western Emperor, Henry IV., who was on bad terms with the Normans and their patron, the famous Pope Gregory VII.; but the subsidy did not infuse much additional vigour into Henry's somewhat futile operations in Italy, which, however, may have contributed to induce Guiscard to return to his dominions in 1082. More effective were Alexius's dealings with Venice, whose sympathies were still Roman; liberal subsidies and permission to trade with his ports free of customs duties brought a large Venetian fleet on the scene under the Doge Domenico Silvio, who severely defeated the Norman squadron under Guiscard's son, Bohemund.

Meanwhile Guiscard was busied with the siege of Durazzo. The defence was in the highest degree gallant. The blockade at sea was necessarily imperfect; by land Palæologos repelled all Guiscard's efforts, destroyed his siege machines and towers, and held his own for month after month, until, in October, Alexius at last appeared upon the scene with a large but very unreliable army. Guiscard was forced to raise the siege; he had suffered very

eavily; but Alexius made the mistake of giving attle with his untrustworthy troops. He had xchanged some of them with Palæologos, who now mself commanded one of the imperial divisions, ut he clearly had little control over the motley rce. The Varangian Guards in the van under eir commander 'Nampites' charged the Norman ne before Alexius could support them, and drove ne left wing into the sea; but Guiscard was able to ncentrate upon and destroy them before help rrived. Alexius, who was hurrying to their assistnce, was caught in the mêlée, and had to fight his ay out. Thereupon the rest of the army, with ommendable discretion, but very doubtful loyalty nd courage, faced about and retreated in haste, hough half of it had not come into action. Its loss as not heavy; the 6,000 slain were mainly Varanians; but it was completely routed and scattered.

In 1082 Durazzo, after holding out for several months longer, at last surrendered. Guiscard was orced to return to Italy to aid Pope Gregory against Henry IV., but Bohemund overran Epirus and ook Joannina. In 1083 he advanced against Alexius, who had rallied fresh forces, routed his new levies easily, first near Ochrida, and then at Arta, and captured Kastoria. Ochrida, however, repulsed Bohemund, who thereupon turned southward into Thessaly and besieged Larissa, which held out gallantly under Leo Kephalas. Alexius advanced to its relief, and was this time successful. His generalship was good; the Normans were severely defeated. Bohemund retreated to Durazzo, and thence to Italy, while Alexius recovered

Kastoria. In 1085 Alexius and his Venetian allies besieged Corfu, but Guiscard completely defeated the Venetian fleet and broke up the siege. It was a stroke of good-fortune for the Empire that he died soon after. Alexius then besieged and recovered Durazzo, and afterwards Corfu. He rewarded Venice by the grant in fief of Dalmatia. His seat upon the throne was very insecure during these years, and there was more than one plot against him, but they were successfully overcome.

In 1086 the Seljuks took Antioch, which for fifteen years had maintained itself, a forlorn outpost of the Empire in Syria. North of Antioch they hardly advanced; Cilicia and the Cappadocian Taurus were full of desperate Armenian refugees who formed a very effective barrier against further progress, and maintained an isolated existence in their fastnesses, while the rugged Trapezuntine province also remained untouched. Elsewhere Asia Minor was full of semi-independent Seljuk Emirs, though about this time they were brought into some kind of temporary subordination by the great Sultan Malek Shah. The Seljuk power in the peninsula was a very fluid and uncertain quantity; the Danishmend State, which included Sebaste (Sivas), Comana (Tokat), Cabira (Nicsar), Albarta, and Malatia, was practically independent.

Scarcely had Alexius freed himself from the Norman war when he was assailed by the Pechenegs and Cumans, who poured into Thrace in 1087. They were defeated by Nikolaos Mavrokatakalon and forced back to the Danube; but in 1088 Alexius, endeavouring to drive them beyond the great frontier

Schah et Jouillot.

THE PALACE OF THE PORPHYROGENITUS

cream, was defeated at Silistria. Thereupon their hordes again swarmed into Thrace, and for more than two years Alexius was engaged in an extraordinary partisan campaign near Constantinople. It is certain that he often headed a mere handful of men; more than once he was in imminent danger: even when successful he failed to drive the barbarians from the province. But at last he succeeded in sowing dissensions between Pechenegs and Cumans; the latter came over to his side, and thus strengthened he took the offensive, and entirely defeated the Pechenegs on April 29, 1091. The European provinces were now clear of invaders, but they must have suffered greatly. In the same year Alexius concluded a treaty with Malek Shah in Asia Minor. It is surprising to find that it was to his advantage. He recovered Nicomedia and several maritime towns, and soon afterwards recaptured Sinope by stratagem, thus reopening communication by land with the long-isolated Trapezuntine provinces. The Seljuk Emirs were prone to action on their own account, however; in 1090 Tzach of Smyrna defeated an imperial squadron at sea; in 1092 he actually proclaimed himself Roman Emperor! He was defeated near Ephesus by John Dukas, brother of the Empress, but in 1093 was able to besiege Abydos. He was, however, murdered during the siege. The position of Alexius in 1093 was that he was more firmly seated on the throne than in 1081; that he had consolidated his position in Europe, and had begun to recover Asia Minor. Malek Shah had died in 1092, and his successor at Nicæa, Daúd Kilij Arslan I.,

had too much trouble with the Danishmend and Seljuk Emirs to attempt recovery of Nicomedia and Sinope.

Alexius was in fresh danger. In the time of his trouble he had sought help from the West. Possibly his appeals and diplomacy would of themselves have effected little, but the dull, brutal cruelty of the Turks had made an immense sensation among Europeans, who had hitherto been able to make pilgrimages to Palestine with little interference from the Khalifs. With the question of the motives of the Crusades we have not to deal; the diplomacy of Alexius, religious feeling, the commercial instincts of the Italian cities, all played their part. In 1093 Alexius was apprised that Western Europe was arming, and would soon be in his territories. He probably spent that year and the next in reorganizing the defences of the European provinces.

In 1095 bodies of enthusiasts, including comparatively few fighting men, made their way eastward. Their pillaging propensities gave great trouble in Hungary, and yet more in the Empire. Some of them, under Walter the Penniless and Peter the Hermit, eventually reached Thrace. They were a mere barbarian horde, half armed and entirely without discipline. Alexius quietly passed them over to Asia, where they were promptly massacred by the Seljuks, a few only, including the leaders, escaping. Next year the main mass of the Crusading warriors of Europe began to arrive. Their numbers were undoubtedly vast, though there were certainly not as many as 100,000 horsemen, much less 500,000 infantry. There is some reason to think that at the

battle of Antioch, in 1098, they put about 50,000 men into the field—this at a time when they had suffered enormously from a year's warfare under a burning sun and the horrors of a long blockade. Possibly they may have mustered 120,000 fighting men at Constantinople; the number of non-combatants was doubtless large.

Troubles were endless. The Westerners were mostly barbarians of a type not at all above the Teutonic invaders of the Empire in the fifth century; their leaders were as illiterate and nearly as coarse and brutal as their followers. They had not the remotest conception of civilized peace and order; they were so poor that even had they been willing to buy their food they had not the means. The leaders—some of them at least—were anxious to keep the peace; but even the best of them could ill comprehend a state of things in which life was sacred and property secure; many were too haughtily ignorant to attempt to do so; one of the greatest, Bohemund, was an old foe of the Empire. No doubt Alexius found it hard to understand their blind enthusiasm; but his policy towards them could hardly have been avoided; his subjects were clearly his first consideration. There was doubtless cheating of the ignorant barbarians by his contractors, but, as their supplies were paid for by his subsidies, they had little reason to complain. Business—otherwise swindling—is always the same; contractors make their market with equal indifference out of Romans, Crusaders, or British armies of the twentieth century. Of course the Crusaders declared that the 'Greeks' betrayed them; it would

have been strange had it been otherwise. But division after division reached Constantinople in a state of confusion and indiscipline not worse than that in which they had started from the West; from Nisch onwards they lived on supplies furnished by the Emperor.

Alexius succeeded in so arranging matters that no two divisions of the great irregular horde were camped before the capital at one time. He also induced all the chiefs, except Raymond of Toulouse, to do him homage. Even Bohemund was persuaded into doing so—a most remarkable proof of the force of the Emperor's personality, though, of course, he had a large army in Constantinople, and the Norman chief, who had measured swords with him, had not the illusions as to his weakness which possessed the stupid, arrogant barons of France and Germany. Alexius also persuaded the Crusaders to restore to him all their conquests which were old imperial possessions; on his side, he undertook to supply them, and there is no doubt that many of the chiefs received large sums from him.

In June, 1097, the united forces of the Empire and the Crusade besieged and took Nicæa, which surrendered to Alexius rather than to the savage Westerners, and caused thereby a tumult among the latter, who were thirsty for pillage. Alexius smoothed matters over by a large donation, and the Crusading host moved on. Kilij Arslan, to concentrate a sufficient force against them, had to summon to his help the Emirs of Western Asia Minor. A few weeks after Nicæa, the Crusaders

blundered among the Seljuk horde near Dorylæum, and by some accident gained a complete victory. They moved across Asia Minor, now in great part a desert ; and, losing very heavily, chiefly through ignorant incompetence, reached Antioch, and took it late in the year. During the greater part of the march they had been accompanied and assisted by a division of imperial cavalry under Tatikios. In Antioch the main host was besieged by the whole levy of Mesopotamia and Asia Minor, under Kerbuka of Mosúl, but in 1098 succeeded in defeating it.

The division under Tatikios was the only Byzantine force which co-operated with the Crusaders. They loudly exclaimed against the Emperor's treachery and slackness. Mutual recriminations ended in the chiefs sending a plain-spoken message to the effect that, if he joined them with his troops, they would hand over to him all their conquests. Alexius refused to come, and so the Syrian acquisition of the Crusaders became a series of Western feudal States.

Alexius, in fact, had been busy in western Asia Minor. He has been often scornfully compared to the jackal following the lion, but such criticism is barely sensible ; he was obviously bound to take full advantage of the withdrawal of the Turks. He marched steadily through Bithynia, Mysia, Lydia, and Caria, recovering them with little fighting, since the Turkish bands remaining were few. In 1099 it was the same. The Crusaders took Jerusalem, and next year defeated the Fatimid army at Ascalon ; while Alexius was busy recovering Phrygian fortresses and reorganizing the long-

separated provinces. From the military point of view he did his work well. He accorded a wise measure of local independence to the frontier cities, and organized a system of defence of the Bithynian hill passes by means of military colonies. Economically he could do little. The Seljuk ravages had exterminated the peasant proprietors; and though Alexius rebuilt and repopulated Tralles, Chonæ, and other towns, this was done by collecting within them refugees from districts which were left bare from insecurity.

In 1103 Bohemund—now Count of Antioch—was taken by the Danishmends. Alexius was already moving to the recovery of Cilicia, having now established himself in the West, and his troops reoccupied Seleucia. Meanwhile, however, the Pisans, who were friendly to Bohemund, had declared war on Alexius, and entered the Ægean with a large fleet. Near Rhodes they were defeated by the imperial fleet under Tatikios and the Italian Landulf, and thereupon made peace; but the indomitable Bohemund had escaped to Europe, and was collecting mercenaries for another invasion like that of 1081.

In Cilicia the imperial army had considerable success; Tarsus, Adana, and Mopsuestia, were taken, and the Armenians of Taurus brought under vassalage. Alexius himself was at Thessalonica, preparing for the advent of Bohemund; but none the less he had during the following year and afterwards two strong armies in Asia. During these years he was assailed by numerous plots, of which the last was in 1107. They were all put down,

nd the conspirators punished, but with mildness; ruelty was not among the vices of Alexius.

In 1107 Bohemund crossed to Epirus with more han 200 ships and 45,000 miscellaneous mercenaries, nd once more laid siege to Durazzo, which was defended as stoutly as in 1081. Alexius acted with reat skill and caution. He moved to the neighbourhood of the place, and after much skilful manœuvring practically blockaded his antagonist in his camp, when his army slowly dwindled away with famine, disease, and sporadic fighting. After persisting bravely but uselessly for many months, Bohemund at last gave up, and sued for peace, promising to become a faithful vassal of the Empire. Antioch had been gallantly defended by his nephew Tancred; but Bohemund had been reduced to helplessness; it was evident that the Empire was far stronger than in 1081. Internally the effect of the victory was that plots against the Emperor ceased. He spent the next three years in the labour of reorganization, not unsuccessfully. In 1111 Bohemund ended his restless life.

In the same year Hassan, Emir of Cappadocia, made a raid into the imperial territory. The Seljuks were now more or less hemmed in by the imperial advance and by the Danishmend State in the north-east; their headquarters were at Iconium, 300 miles from their old station at Nicæa, but their nomadic habits left them little alternative to plundering. Hassan was defeated, but four years later the Seljuks made another murderous raid right up to the Ægean. This called Alexius again into the field, though now sixty-eight years of age and failing in

health. He cleared Phrygia of the Turkish raiders, and pushed forward as far as Philomelion, about seventy miles from Iconium. He did not choose, however, to attack the Seljuk headquarters ; no doubt a further advance through the ruined country about Lake Tatta was risky ; he began to retire, and the Seljuks attacked him. They were completely defeated, and the campaign ended in victory, but left the chance of regaining Central Asia Minor more remote than ever ; the country had been so ruined that the march from Philadelphia or Laodicea to Iconium was a task of immense difficulty. The net result of the reign of Alexius was that he had regained, and to some extent reorganized, Western Asia Minor.

Alexius died two years later, in 1118, at the age of seventy, after a troubled reign of thirty-seven years. His last act was to refuse to disinherit his son John in favour of his eldest child, the famous Anna, and her husband, Nicephorus Bryennios. Anna was several years older than her brother, and had a strong desire for power. Her husband was not in sympathy with her, but her mother used all her influence on her behalf, without avail, and is said in her disappointment to have taunted the dying Emperor with his hypocrisy. The charge was not, perhaps, without truth, but the incident does the Empress no great credit. According to his lights, Alexius had done his duty to the Empire. He had failed to do much towards economic recovery ; perhaps he could, in any case, have done little ; he was hampered with a large circle of family connections, for whom he thought himself obliged to

nd salaried posts and elaborately coined titles. His subtle diplomacy had not always been successful; his dealings with the Crusaders had done harm as well as good, and had exposed him to not absolutely unfounded charges of treachery; but still he had raised the Empire from its degradation, and had left it in a better condition than had been the case since the days of Constantine X.

John Comnenos was about thirty-one at the time of his accession, a harsh-featured man of insignificant appearance, black-haired, and so dark of complexion that the Constantinopolitans called him 'Mauro-Johannes'; but his character was in strong contrast to his unprepossessing personal appearance. He was by far the best of his line, strong, brave, hard-working, of excellent intentions, not without capacity for peaceful administration, mild and forbearing. The first internal event of his reign was a palace intrigue against him directed by his sister. It was defeated, but the Emperor took no harsh measures against Anna, and actually restored her forfeited property. He set himself to do all in his power to moderate the severity of taxation, which was now reaching a pitch of intensity like that in the earlier Empire under Theodosius and Justinian. Zonaras, a retired minister of Alexius, and hardly likely, therefore, to be prejudiced overmuch against his order, says bitterly that the best tradition of Roman kingship were dead, that constitutional government was a thing of the past, and that the Comnenian administration slaughtered the people like sheep, ate their flesh, and sucked the very marrow from their bones. Possibly this terrible indictment applies to

the days of Manuel I. rather than those of Alexius or John, but it is quite clear that the economic condition of the Empire was steadily proceeding from bad to worse. The foundation of the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem had diverted to the Syrian ports much of the trade which had formerly passed through the Empire; the commercial privileges conferred on Italian cities had aggravated the evil. The vast revenue of the Macedonian Emperors could not now be raised with ease; everywhere the receipts showed signs of diminution; the deficit was made up by new and crushing exactions, with the natural result that the population declined steadily in prosperity. Worse still, the expenditure on the Court was heavier than ever before; the many-branched imperial house absorbed vast sums yearly; internal economics were entirely neglected; roads and public works fell fast to decay. The old fear of further diminishing the revenue by employing taxpayers in the defensive services led to the repetition of the blunder of Theodosius and his successors; the army was swamped with expensive and more or less unreliable mercenaries; the vitally important naval force was allowed to decay. John did his best. Details of his reforms are lacking, but there is no doubt that they consisted mainly in careful economy. He was a warrior by birth and training, but it does not appear that he waged unnecessary war. He curtailed expenditure on the Court as far as possible; he seems to have had a strong personal dislike for ostentation. He had a great aversion for unnecessary bloodshed; capital punishment was in abeyance during his reign. It is a thousand pities

t we know so little of his measures; but there is doubt that he won, as no Roman Emperor had r won, the love and trust of his people. Before g the nickname 'Mauro-Johannes' was tabooed ong the delighted Constantinopolitans, and for all e thereafter the ugly dark-skinned Emperor was alo-Johannes'; men had recognized that the sightly body enclosed a beautiful soul.

In 1120 John took command in Asia, and cap-red Laodicea and Sozopolis, thereby securing uthern Phrygia; and in 1121 he recovered great rt of Pisidia and Lycia—Alexius had held only e coast-line. Next year he was called to Europe a Pecheneg invasion, which he repelled by victory at Beroë in Hæmus. In 1123 trouble reatened with the Servians. Next year John ove them across the border; but they now called the aid of the Hungarians, who in 1125 took elgrade and advanced as far as Sofia. At a place lled Chran they were defeated by John, and for e rest of his reign gave no more trouble.

In 1126 John again took the field in Asia Minor, vaded Paphlagonia, and captured Kastamon, which ad been the seat of his family before the Seljuk nquests. The result of his first eight years was that e position of the Empire in Asia had been much nproved, and land communications established with ilicia and Pontus. The Emperor seems for the resent to have been satisfied; for several years ereafter he devoted his attention to internal affairs; was doubtless during this period that most of his dministrative reforms were carried out. There ere some bickerings with the Venetians in 1127,

which were successfully dealt with. The ten comparatively quiet years 1127-1136 have another interest. John was busy refounding, resettling, and reforming; but it was then, probably, that he became thoroughly acquainted with the critical economic state of his realm. When, in 1137, he again took the field, his operations were directed towards Syria. Professor Oman considers that this policy was strategically false, but to the writer it seems that it was economically sound; the Emperor probably hoped to obtain possession of the Syrian ports, and so control once more the trade of the Levant.

In 1137 John entered Cilicia and established effective control over the Armenian state in the Taurus, and then entered Syria and took Antioch, making the Latin county tributary. Next year he invaded Mohammedan Syria; it was the first time for fifty years that the imperial eagles had been seen there. He was ill-supported by the Latins, and failed before Sheizar; but in its main results the campaign was successful; John considered it decisive enough to permit him in the following year to devote his attention to the North. Here he was opposed to the Danishmends, against whom he was entirely successful, taking Nicsar (Neocæsarea) and considerably advancing the frontier in Paphlagonia and Pontus. His success alarmed the Seljuks of 'Rúm,'* who in 1141 pushed raids into Phrygia and Bithynia. They were, however, repulsed, and in 1142 John retaliated. He conquered Pisidia up to the shores of Lake Karalis, removed the semi-inde-

* Of Rome—*i.e.*, those settled in the Roman Empire.

dent cultivators on its islets into the Empire—an dvised economic measure, as Finlay points out nd marched triumphantly through Southern caonia into Syria, wasted the county of Antioch l then retired to Anazarbus, where he wintered, ending to take up again his great scheme of con- ering Latin Syria. He was in the midst of his parations, when, on a hunting expedition, his arm s accidentally pierced by a poisoned or dirty ow. The wound mortified quickly, and on April 8, 43, in his fifty-fifth year, John died. His reign of arly twenty-five years had been very successful. erritory had been recovered, the administration rried out with an efficiency that it was never again know, and the financial problem met by strict onomy and prudence. Roman traditions had dis- peared under the successors of Theodora III.; od and careful government passed away with hn II., the one ruler of the Roman Empire whom s subjects called 'the Good.'

John's designated heir was his youngest son anuel, a curious figure in history, somewhat of a zantine Cœur-de-Lion. There was some natural nily opposition, but Manuel was loyally supported his father's Turkish minister, Axuch, and seated mself on the throne with little difficulty. He as not devoid either of statesmanship or military pacity, but was reckless, vain, fickle, and extrava- nt. The last vice was fatal in its effects on the mpire; the results of John's wisdom were soon aced; taxation pressed harder and ever harder on the provincials, and matters came at last to e sad condition which evoked the bitter observa-

tions of Zonaras. Manuel's reign is only a record of wars, some of them sufficiently purposeless, and none productive of really solid results.

Manuel was a pronounced Westernizer; alike in policy, in direction of conquests, and in matrimony, his ideas were directed to Europe; he neglected during the greater part of his reign his father's design of steady consolidation in the East. At first, however, he showed signs of following it up. In 1144 he took up the command at Anazarbus, and marched into Syria. Antioch was again entered, but Manuel was content to display his power, and made no attempt to carry out his father's wider plans. He left in command in Cilicia his cousin Andronicus, one of the most extraordinary figures in Byzantine history, and returned to Constantinople. Andronicus was defeated by Thoros of Armenia in the following year.

In 1145 and 1146 Manuel pushed raids far into Seljuk territory, but they were purposeless and had slight effect. In 1146 the fleet of the Normans of Sicily seized Corfu and raided Greece, sacking Thebes and Corinth, and carrying off many experienced artisans and silk-weavers. Manuel for the present could not avenge the insult, for the hosts of Germany under Kaiser Konrad III., and of France under Louis VII., were already descending upon him in the Second Crusade. There were more chances of friction in 1147 than there had been in 1095-1097, for the Emperor of the West was present in person. Manuel has been accused, like Alexius, of treachery, but there can be no doubt that the disasters which befell the Crusaders in Asia

Minor were mostly due to their lack of elementary military science; the only man among them who appears as being in any sense capable of command was an obscure knight named Gilbert, who directed the march of the French army to Attalia. Both armies were either destroyed or otherwise reduced to impotence in Asia Minor by the Seljuks; a mere remnant reached Palestine.

Then, in 1148, Manuel turned against the Normans. He recovered Corfu, and his fleet ravaged the coast of Sicily, though George of Antioch made a daring reconnaissance into the Propontis, firing arrows in defiance into the gardens of the imperial palace. There was little serious fighting, but peace was not formally made until 1155. Manuel was flattered by King William's expressions of submission, but of course these conveyed nothing substantial.

In the same year the Servians made a raid into the Empire. Manuel promptly advanced against them, defeated them on the Drina, overran the country and reduced it to vassalage, though it needed constant punitive expeditions to retain it in anything like permanent subjection.

Hostilities next broke out with Hungary, doubtless owing to Servian appeals and intrigues. Manuel forestalled the Hungarian attack, crossed the Danube, and wasted southern Hungary, garrisoning the captured towns. King Geisa II. attempted to recover Brancsova, which was defended by Andronicus Comnenos; but the Emperor relieved it by a rapid march, though he considered his cousin's conduct so equivocal that he deprived him of his command. In 1153 peace was concluded. Servia

was probably left in the lurch ; otherwise the *status quo* was maintained. In 1152 Andronicus, who had been again entrusted with the command in Cilicia, was defeated by Thoros for the second time, and disgraced by his certainly long-suffering relative and Emperor. After a considerable delay Manuel entered Cilicia in person in 1155, brought Thoros to complete subjection, and once more reduced Antioch, which, under Reginald de Chatillon, had shown signs of rebellion, to submission, remaining in the East until 1157. The Seljuks of Rúm were now under the energetic Sultan Kilij Arslan II. He attacked Manuel on his homeward march, but was severely defeated, and thereupon made peace, determining to consolidate the Turkish possessions on the plateau before renewing war. He was a man of considerable ability, and, in a visit made by him soon afterwards to Constantinople, he probably formed a good idea of the Emperor's unstable character. For some eighteen years thereafter there was peace, at least nominally, between Empire and Sultanate, and during this period Kilij Arslan conquered and absorbed the Danishmend Emirate, and united the whole central plateau under his rule. In 1158 Baldwin III., King of Jerusalem, was at Constantinople, and from that date thereafter the Crusading state was always more or less dependent on the Empire. The agreement was sealed by the King's marriage to Manuel's niece Theodora.

In 1161 the peace with Hungary was broken. Geisa II. in that year was succeeded by Stephen III., but Manuel claimed the right of nominating the successor, and set up a prince named Ladislaus.

Sébah & Joaillier.

INTERIOR OF SANCTA SOPHIA, CONSTANTINOPLE.

The huge inscribed placques, the tribunes, pulpits, and platforms are all Mohammedan. In order to look towards Mecca, the worshippers are obliged to range themselves diagonally across the pavement. The Christian emblems still remain bright and clear in many places. Note the Cherubim in the springing of the dome.

Stephen III. was driven from the throne, but Ladislaus only lived for six months. Manuel appointed in his place another Stephen, but he was detested as the symbol of the country's servitude, and deposed, Stephen III. being reinstated. Manuel seems to have convinced himself that the new King's position was too strong to be assailed, and in 1163 again concluded peace, Stephen ceding the fortress of Zeugmin (Semlin), and his brother taking to wife Maria, the Emperor's daughter. There was, however, civil war in Hungary between the two Stephens, and Manuel took advantage of it to invade the country once more. Peace was brought about by the mediation of the King of Bohemia. Manuel in all this shows to poor advantage; he concluded and broke treaties, and made war, with very slight reference to anything except his unstable desires. Byzantine influence was evidently dominant in Hungary, but it does not appear to have been popular. In 1165 Stephen declared war and recaptured Zeugmin, but next year Manuel came upon the scene, retook the place, and marched into Croatia. By the end of the year he had conquered nearly the entire country between the Danube and the Adriatic, and had recovered Dalmatia, which, as we have seen, had been donated in fief to Venice by Alexius I., but had been conquered by Koloman of Hungary. In 1167 Manuel returned to Constantinople, and his troops in Hungary were severely defeated. He was himself in bad health, and in 1168 he could not take the field, but placed his nephew Andronicus Kontostephanos in command. A great battle was fought near Zeugmin, and the

Hungarians entirely defeated. A treaty of peace followed, by which Manuel retained all Croatia and Dalmatia up to the Save, and Zeugmin and its neighbourhood. Until the end of the Comnenian period Hungary was politically subservient to the Empire.

In 1170 Manuel was approached by Amalric I. of Jerusalem for assistance against Egypt. He assented; but the fleet which he fitted out, though over 200 strong, was of inferior quality. The navy had been so much neglected that it was impossible to produce a really effective force; and though the victor of Zeugmin was in chief command, he could effect little. Damietta was besieged, but the Latins gave little or no assistance, and the expedition was a failure. Amalric visited Constantinople next year; perhaps he was obeying a summons. He probably had some awkward explanations to make. Manuel utilized the opportunity to make a display of his pomp and power; Amalric returned to Jerusalem well furnished with gold. The Emperor's help undoubtedly contributed much to the prolongation of the existence of the decaying Crusading State.

Meanwhile war had broken out with Venice. The great naval republic was probably annoyed because Manuel had not renewed the grant to it of Dalmatia; commercial jealousy also contributed to force on war. Manuel had entered into alliance with the Genoese and Pisans, who were rivals of Venice in the Levantine trade, and with the commercial town of Ancona. Venice declared war in 1171. The struggle lasted for three years, but was

absolutely indecisive. In 1172 Venice seized several Dalmatian ports, and a fleet, under the Doge Vital Michieli, sailed up the Ægean and captured Chios. Manuel was again unprepared; doubtless the failure of the Egyptian expedition had further disorganized the fleet, but by 1173 a large force had been put together, which proceeded to attack the Venetians. The latter had suffered terribly from disease, and were in no condition to offer resistance; Chios was recovered, and finally only seventeen shattered galleys reached Venice. So great was the exasperation and alarm that the unfortunate Doge was assassinated. The Venetian attack on Ancona was repelled with great loss, with the help of Ferrara and the Countess of Bertinoro, and in 1174 the republic was glad to conclude peace on the basis of the maintenance of the *status quo ante*.

Then, too late, Manuel decided to resume the recovery of Asia Minor. The chances were less favourable than in 1097; Kilij Arslan had united all the Seljuk and Danishmend Emirates beneath his banner. Manuel began operations by fortifying Dorylæum and Subleon near the head-waters of the Mæander. This was treated by the Sultan as a *casus belli*.

In 1176 Manuel gathered a large army at Laodicea, and advanced on Iconium. Kilij Arslan had collected all his forces, and attacked Manuel in the passes near Myriokephalon. The Emperor displayed the grossest lack of foresight and precaution, and advanced without making any attempt to reconnoitre, or even, as it appears, warning the officers to keep proper order. When the army was

fairly entangled in the pass, Kilij Arslan gave the word to attack. Seljuk horsemen charged into the head of the crowded column, and poured down the slopes on either side. The troops, taken by surprise, and without space wherein to deploy, could make no effective resistance; Manuel lost his head, and thought only of saving his life. His guards brought him safely through the disorder and carnage to Myriokephalon; but his spirit was broken, and, so far from attempting to restore order among the fugitives who were pouring in, he sat in listless despair, though his forsaken troops were still making a gallant fight. Several officers succeeded in keeping their men together, and in making a way out of the fatal defile; Andronicus Kontostephanos, who commanded the rearguard, behaved in a manner worthy of his reputation. His position was the most dangerous of all; but the men closed their ranks round the victor of Zeugmin, and forced their way steadily ahead through the wild confusion. Their loss was heavy, but the general and all who survived got through safely and in order to the Emperor. The army had been as much frightened as mauled; half of it, probably, never struck a blow, but the slaughter had been great, and it had lost all its stores, military chest, and baggage. Yet it rallied quickly, and the Seljuk horde made no attempt to close; the Sultan probably recognized that his victory had been due to exceptional circumstances.

Manuel himself had lost heart; his self-confidence had been shattered for ever. The excellent conduct of his nephew and other generals only threw

his own poor behaviour into higher relief. In his distress after his flight he asked for water; but when it was brought he dropped it in horror, as he saw its crimson tinge. 'Christian blood!' he groaned; and from the gloomy groups about him a voice spoke out boldly: 'What of it, Augustus? You have drunk your subjects' blood all your reign!' It was a bitter allusion to the remorseless taxation which had crushed the life out of the Empire. One wonders if the bold speaker knew Zonaras, and what was his after-fate.

So low had Manuel's spirit sunk that he despaired of making his way home, and made overtures for peace. Kilij Arslan was nothing loath; he exacted only that Dorylæum and Subleon should be dismantled. Manuel consented, and destroyed the walls of Subleon, which was not far off; but the energetic remonstrances of the staff appear to have recalled him to himself, and he repudiated the treaty.

In 1077 Kilij Arslan sent a large army down the Mæander. It took or received ransom from Tralles and Antioch, and, storming several fortresses, made its way to the coast, where it filled a cart with sand and seashells, to prove to its Sultan that it had indeed looked upon the Mediterranean; but it did not bring them back. On its retreat it was attacked by John Dukas Vataces, and utterly defeated. Kilij Arslan thereupon invaded Cilicia and besieged Claudiopolis; but Manuel, now more of his former self, arrived by forced marches from the west, and swept the besiegers across the mountains to Iconium. In 1078 peace was concluded, ap-

parently on the basis of the *status quo*. The Seljuks might snatch a success, but were clearly no match as yet for the Empire. But Manuel had won little credit; it was Andronicus Kontostephanos who had saved the disaster at Myriokephalon from becoming a catastrophe; it was Vataces who had repelled the invasion of 1077.

Manuel died on September 24, 1080, at the age of fifty-eight, after a reign of thirty-seven years. His character has been demonstrated by the record of his actions. He was not the equal of his two predecessors, who were both tolerable statesmen and good soldiers, and of whom John was certainly a successful administrator. Manuel was 'a crowned knight-errant.' His best political designs were spoiled by feeble execution; even in Hungary, where his success was considerable, he showed great vacillation. His conduct at Myriokephalon shows him in a very bad light, and in strong contrast to his indomitable grandfather. His internal administration was as bad as it well could be, conducted without regard to any other consideration than the payment of his mercenary armies. Externally, despite the comparative failure of 1176-1178, the Empire was great and powerful; it had extended towards the west, and Hungary was its vassal; its influence was still great in the Caucasian region. But internally matters were almost hopeless. The free agricultural population of Europe was disappearing, as that of Asia had done; the people were ground down by exactions; everything was in disorder; there was a splendid Court and a fine army—and that was all. The Empire was a

whited sepulchre already tottering, ready to fall before a vigorous push, unless heroic measures were taken.

Manuel's successor was his son, Alexius II., the offspring of his third wife, Maria of Antioch. His short reign was chiefly occupied in struggles for the regency. The young Emperor's relative Alexius was the chief assistant of the Empress-mother at first, but he was gradually supplanted by Andronicus, that first cousin of Manuel whom we have already more than once encountered. After his second fiasco in Cilicia he had been imprisoned for many years, but after strange vicissitudes and extraordinary adventures had been pardoned. His character was as strange as his escapades and adventures. Professor Oman curtly describes him as an unscrupulous ruffian, but this is only a part of the truth ; he was a ruffian, but a most able and accomplished one. He was entirely reckless of human life, but he was a statesman—a better one than any of the Comnenian Cæsars. Scoundrel as he was, he won the passionate love of more than one woman. He was a man of singularly temperate life, and at seventy was still strong and hardy, with the facial aspect of a middle-aged man. In 1183 he finally obtained the upper hand. Alexius Comnenos and the distinguished general Andronicus Kontostephanos were blinded ; Maria, the Emperor's sister, poisoned ; and the hoary schemer completed the blood-bath by strangling both the young Emperor and his mother. When the murderers had done their work, he came to view the dead, and kicked the Emperor's corpse as it lay. 'Your

father was a villain,' he said, 'your mother a harlot, and you were a fool!' How much of the sweeping assertion was true is doubtful, and for Andronicus to make it was like Satan rebuking sin.

By such means Andronicus obtained the supreme power, and another side of his complex character came into play. He set vigorously to work to reform the administration. He abolished the sale of offices, which under the Comnenoi had become common, and effected great improvements in the administration of the law. He set himself sternly against the overshadowing influence of the aristocracy, and his capacity and grim energy made him a dangerous antagonist. There were rebellions against him, but they were of family origin, not popular in any sense of the word. The most prominent was that of Isaac Comnenos, Governor of Cilicia. Andronicus was quite capable of dealing with them. He spoke of marrying again; he was so handsome and vigorous, despite his seventy-four years, that the idea seemed not all absurd. More dangerous than rebellion was an invasion of the Sicilian Normans in 1185. Their army took Durazzo, and marched with little opposition across Macedonia to Thessalonica, which also fell into their hands. Andronicus was preparing to march against them when the end came.

His anti-aristocratic policy had now fully developed, and execution after execution drove the nobles to despair. One of them, Isaac Angelos,* arrested in his house, cut down the imperial emissary and

* The Angeloi were connected by marriage with the Comnenoi —hence Andronicus' persecution of them (see Genealogy).

EASTERN EMPIRE, 1180.

Direct Rule

Indirect Rule & Influence (*Outlined thus*)

raised a revolt. Andronicus had earned hatred on every side, and no one would lift a hand on his behalf. He was absent from the capital, and when he returned was seized and slowly done to death. He bore his sufferings with a patience which might have become a better man. With all his monstrous vices and crimes, he was probably the ablest of the Comnenoi—at all events, the only one who clearly discerned the signs of the times—and his death was a fatal blow to the declining Empire.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE ANGELOI—THE TRAITOR'S STROKE

Isaac Angelos—His weak character—Repulse of Normans—Loss of Cyprus—Bulgarian revolt—Internal maladministration—Alexius Angelos—Increasing disorder—The Fourth Crusade—Venetian machinations—The Crusade diverted to Constantinople—Attack on Constantinople—Flight of Alexius III.—Alexius IV.—Exactions of Crusaders—Alexius V.—Storm of Constantinople—Sack and partial destruction—Disruption of Empire.

ISAAC ANGELOS was a sovereign of a type which hitherto we have hardly met in East Roman history. He was a mere spectacular figure—handsome, a fine courtier, but without capacity for government. His elevation was a disaster; the times were such that a vigorous ruler was urgently needed. Vile as he was, Andronicus might have saved the Empire had he survived for ten years; under the Angeloi hope was soon lost.

At first Isaac II. showed some vigour; we should, perhaps, rather say that the measures initiated by Andronicus were carried out without interference by the new Emperor. The Sicilian army was advancing on the capital from Thessalonica; a Sicilian fleet was in the Propontis. An army under Alexius Branas covered Constantinople; Isaac pro-

tiated it by prompt payment of arrears and a handsome donation; the total cost was 4,000 pounds of gold (£190,000), a fact which shows how wealthy, even in its decline, the Empire was as compared with the barbarian West, where half this sum would have been thought enormous. The army was still efficient when well led; Branas defeated the Sicilians before Mosynopolis, and, following them up, caught and again routed them at Amphipolis. They retreated in headlong flight to Durazzo, and forthwith evacuated the Empire, the fleet withdrawing at the same time. A Seljuk raid was bought off, and Isaac might hope for quiet.

But in 1186 Bulgaria rose in revolt under three brothers, Peter, John, and Asan; the cause was undoubtedly fiscal oppression. The first effort was defeated; but in the same year an expedition to Cyprus, where Isaac Comnenos had now established himself, was repulsed. In 1187 Isaac's uncle John defeated the rebels, but they gained in their turn a success over John Cantacuzenos, and crossed Hæmus into Thrace. Isaac now, much against his inclination, placed Alexius Branas in command. Branas defeated the Bulgarians and cleared Thrace, but then proclaimed himself Emperor and marched on the capital. Isaac only saved himself by enlisting in his behalf Conrad, Marquis of Montferrat, afterwards famous in the Third Crusade, who was then in Constantinople. The troops of Branas arrived outside the gates and attacked, but were repulsed; then Montferrat sallied out and defeated them, killing Branas. His death was another misfortune for the Empire; he was a good general, and

might have made a good Emperor; he could not have been worse than Isaac. In the confusion of the civil war the Bulgarians steadily made headway, and in 1190 the great Western Emperor, Friedrich 'Barbarossa,' reached the East on his way to the Crusade, and there was fresh trouble.

Isaac had no love for Crusaders; there was peace between him and the famous Salah-ed-dín Yusúf, now supreme in Egypt and Syria; the ill-will of East towards West had been becoming steadily more pronounced since 1144. Barbarossa had to fight his way through Thrace, but his great personality cowed Isaac; peace was made, and Friedrich crossed to Asia. In 1190 he fought his way through Asia Minor, and had almost reached Syria, when he was drowned in the Calycadnus. The name which he left in Germany is well known.

In 1191 Cyprus was finally lost owing to Comnenos's quarrel with Richard I. of England; in 1192 Isaac at last took the field against the Bulgarians. He was defeated, and Varna, Nisch, and Sardica, which had hitherto held out, fell one after another. Yet next year Isaac defeated the Servians, who had now joined in the revolt, and reduced them to submission; clearly the situation was still far from desperate.

In 1194 the Bulgarians made their way through Hæmus into Thrace; they failed to take Adrianople, but pushed forward to Arcadiopolis, and defeated an imperial force under its walls. The way was now clear for an advance on the capital; but they probably felt no confidence in their power to capture the great city, and retired northwards. Isaac had

done nothing, employing his time in gorgeous festivities in the palace. The Court expenditure rose to the enormous sum of 4,000 pounds of silver a day, though every department of the administration was starved for want of money. To raise funds, all the expedients of bankruptcy were called into play; offices were bought and sold as formerly, and new ones recklessly created and put up to sale. No pay was attached to any posts, either of old or new creation; the officials, as Niketas bitterly says, were sent forth without purse or scrip to recoup themselves by oppressing the provincials. The Empire had all but lost the last semblance of a constitutionally governed state; its condition would have appeared evil past description to anyone who had known the well-being of the Macedonian times; even to those who could only remember the decadent days of the Comnenoi it was evident that matters could not well be worse. Misgovernment had the usual results; brigandage began everywhere to raise its head as men fled from the intolerable oppression of those worse brigands who called themselves imperial officials; the rule of the law everywhere relaxed; anarchy grew apace.

In 1195 the weak monarch felt himself forced to take energetic measures. Great preparations were made for a renewal of the war; but before Isaac could take the field he was dethroned and blinded by a *coup d'état* effected by his brother Alexius, with whom he had never been on good terms. He had reigned about nine and a half years. He was not a positively bad man, merely weak and pleasure-

loving, not actively cruel or malignant, but as a ruler he deserved little but contempt.

Alexius III. was not long in showing that he was yet more worthless than his brother; Isaac had once or twice roused himself to displays of energy, but Alexius was absolutely inert. He was ruled in all things by his wife Euphrosyne, a specimen of the bad type of society woman, clever, shameless, dissolute, and, what was of worst import for the bleeding Empire, a reckless spendthrift. Alexius made an ostentatious declaration, at his accession, of his intention of instituting reforms; as a matter of fact nothing was done. The disposition of patronage was managed by Euphrosyne and a 'ring' of courtiers, who made their market out of it; while the disorder of the administration was at its height. The army, mutinous and unpaid, melted away to a shadow, and the navy was literally non-existent, hardly a ship being fit for sea, while the ministers of marine sold the stores and equipment almost without concealment. The people, though growing steadily more and more exasperated at the increase of taxation, had no means, except revolt, of expressing their sentiments; they were hardly aware of what was going on; a sale of naval stores, for example, which left the arsenal half empty, could be easily advertised as a disposal of useless superfluities.

For the present there was little trouble in Asia; the Seljuk Sultanate was torn by civil war. In Europe, Asan, the Bulgarian leader, was assassinated by a noble named Iván, who took service with the Empire, and until 1200 faithfully guarded the passes of Hæmus against Kalo-John

r Joannicius, Asan's successor. In 1197 Henry VI., ne great Emperor of the West, threatened the Empire, and Alexius ground his subjects yet more or money to buy him off. In 1198 there was a evolt in Macedonia under Chryses of Strumicia, which was put down in the following year; but in 1200 Iván the Bulgarian broke out into rebellion. He was betrayed and put to death, and then for nce in his life Alexius, or his ministers, made a reat effort. Peace was made with the new Vlacho-Bulgarian kingdom, and exertions were made to estore order in the European provinces. For the moment a return of tranquillity seemed at hand, ut peace was of little avail without reform, and hough there was no longer war on the borders, narchy continued to increase.

At Constantinople the Empress's conduct was the hief subject of gossip during these years. She even-ually went a little too far, even for her invertebrate husband, by indulging openly in a criminal intrigue with a Dukas Vataces. The brilliant imperial prosti-ute was exiled and even imprisoned for several months; but Alexius found himself lost without her unscrupulous cleverness, and Euphrosyne was for-given, released, and was soon flaunting herself before the loungers of Constantinople more gaily than before. Alexius could take his ease once more. His instincts were those of mere self-gratification. He was in this respect more con-emptible than his brother, who had some artistic astes.

In a fool's paradise of gorgeous pageants and anquets the infatuated monarch dreamed away the

years, while without the palace walls confusion ever became worse confounded, when suddenly, without warning, the blow fell. In 1203 he heard that a Venetian fleet and a Western army, accompanied by his nephew Alexius, son of Isaac II., who had succeeded in escaping from Constantinople, were on their way to dethrone him.

The Western army consisted of French, Flemings, and Italians, under Baldwin of Flanders and Bonifacio of Montferrat. It had gathered at Venice for a fourth Crusade against Egypt and Syria, now under the vigorous rule of El-Adil Seif-ed-din Mohammed, brother of Salah-ed-din Yusúf. El-Adil was a pronounced Westernizer; he had contracted a chivalrous acquaintance with Richard Cœur-de-Lion during the Third Crusade, and was alive to the importance of the trade with the Italian cities. He had granted trading privileges to the Venetians, who were by no means disposed to enter upon hostilities which would rob them of them. They kept the Crusaders loitering near Venice until their scanty funds were expended; and then, under the guidance of the famous Doge Enrico Dandolo, suggested that they should pay for their passage by mercenary service. To this Baldwin of Flanders agreed (Montferrat was already deep in Dandolo's schemes), and the 'Crusading' host proceeded by sea to Zara, which in the weakening of the Empire in the Adriatic had become independent, and stormed it for Venice. The plunder, however, under the careful manipulation of the Venetians, did not yield enough to pay the passage of the army to the East. Dandolo then proposed that the expedition should

be diverted to Constantinople. Young Alexius Angelos appeared in the camp soon after the fall of Zara, and added his entreaties. He was lavish in his promises of assistance of every kind if they would restore his father, and the prospect of pocketing Byzantine gold began to seduce the greedy Western barons.

Still all was not over. The great Pope Innocent III., the promoter of the Crusade, was already angry at the expedition against Zara. Baldwin of Flanders had scruples, as well he might have, as to the morality of the proceeding ; but he was persuaded by Dandolo and Montferrat not to abandon his comrades. The Pope, who would probably have excommunicated the army and Venice alike had he got wind of the nefarious design, was kept in complete ignorance. The agreement finally made was that Venetians and Crusaders should re-enthrone Isaac II., and receive 200,000 marks of silver and a reinforcement of 10,000 troops for service in Syria. To propitiate the Pope, a clause was inserted to the effect that the Eastern Church was to acknowledge the supremacy of Rome. There can be little doubt that Dandolo saw from the first that the conditions were not likely to be fulfilled without friction, and that then Venice would be able to use the barbarian host to destroy her commercial rival. The Venetians were the moving spirit in the great act of international piracy, and upon them in general, on Dandolo in particular, the guilt must mainly rest.

In July the whole force of Venice and the Crusade reached the Bosphorus. The Westerners

were apparently 30,000 to 40,000 strong; as to the Venetian numbers we know nothing. No effective resistance could be made. The only reliable troops in the capital were the Varangian Guard, half mutinous for want of pay. The navy was almost non-existent; only twenty ill-equipped vessels could be put in commission; the Venetians probably had five times that number of galleys. The army was put on shore some distance from the capital, and a tumultuary force which attempted to oppose its march was dispersed without difficulty. The Crusaders' attack on a section of the land-wall was repulsed by the Varangian Guard; but the Venetian fleet forced the boom at the harbour's mouth, and carried twenty-five of the bastions of the low sea-walls by throwing light boarding bridges on to them from scaffolds raised on their galleys. Once inside, they set fire to the harbour quarters, and a terrible conflagration resulted, which destroyed great part of the northern and north-eastern side of the city.

The wretched Alexius III. then fled into the open country, and the deserted officers released and re-enthroned the blind Isaac II. They informed Prince Alexius, and hostilities ceased, to the disgust of the Venetians, who had made a beginning of destroying Constantinople, and longed to complete the work; much to the disappointment of the brutal barons and soldiery, who were thirsting for rapine. For the next five months they lay round the city, endeavouring to wring, by any and every means, money out of the Emperors. Isaac II. seems to have become half imbecile during his long

Sébah & Joaillier.

HARBOUR OF BUCOLEON (THE LION'S MOUTH), CONSTANTINOPLE.

This was the harbour of the great palatial enclosure, used for imperial yachts only. An imperial palace stood on the shore to the left.

confinement, and the presence and threats of the rude Westerners completed the overthrow of his intellect; while his son was treated with contempt by the barons, and detested by the Constantinopolitans as one who had sold them and their Church to the Pope. The ever-increasing demands of the filibusters (of course prompted by Dandolo, with the object of forcing on a quarrel) at last induced Alexius to begin plundering the churches (January, 1204). At once the revolt broke out. The gates were closed, and every Latin who could be caught was murdered. Isaac II. died of terror. Alexius IV. hid himself in the palace, and turned for help in quelling the tumult to the Protovestiarios, Alexius Dukas, nicknamed 'Murtzuphlus,' on account of his bushy beetling eyebrows. Dukas seized and strangled him, was acknowledged Emperor by army and people, and prepared to fight for his crown.

Money was hardly to be had, but the new Emperor seized all the available property of the Angelan courtiers and ministers, and was able partly to pay the arrears due to the few regular corps within the city. He endeavoured to strengthen his hopelessly inadequate force by arming the citizens. This attempt was practically a failure; the Constantinopolitans were unwarlike. They responded to the Emperor's appeals by complaining that they paid taxes for their defence. The regular regiments were made untrustworthy by being diluted with recruits; the militia corps from the first were nearly useless. At sea Alexius could do nothing; the Venetian fleet lay securely in the harbour; all that could be done was to strengthen the sea-wall. The Emperor

was frequently in the field; he had all the instincts of the fighting Byzantine nobility. He straitened the besieging horde for provisions, kept the city fairly supplied, and gained some small successes; but in the single action of any magnitude his raw troops were beaten.

On April 9 the Venetians and Westerners assaulted the city on its north-western side. The Venetians attacked the sea-wall on a front of two miles; the land army threatened the Gate of Blachernæ. The attack was repelled with considerable loss, and the defeat caused dissensions among the allies, Baldwin and the moderate or scrupulous party regarding it as the vengeance of Heaven. But they could do nothing without the Venetians, and Dandolo insisted on a renewal of the assault. On April 12 a second attempt was made, and this time the sea-wall was penetrated. The garrison defended the wall of Blachernæ until taken in the rear, and then fell back into the streets. The Westerners occupied the north-western quarters of the city, and, as before, set fire to the houses.

Under cover of night, the Emperor endeavoured to rally his troops, hoping yet to repel the invaders in a street fight. The men, however, were demoralized; they threw down their arms and deserted in numbers; the Varangian Guard mutinied outright, and refused to fight unless they were paid! Alexius, beside himself with rage and despair, went to the Palace of the Bucoleon; and thence, seeing no hope of defending the city, fled by the Golden Gate into Thrace. Many officers and nobles at once followed his example; in haste, often in disguise, with such

of their money and goods as they could carry, men, women, and children fled to escape from the brutal horde which was already spreading ruin through the splendid city. General Theodore Lascaris, son-in-law of Alexius III., remained until day, striving to gather troops for a final effort, but he could do nothing; the army had melted away; and at last he, too, withdrew to Asia. At dawn the victors found that all resistance had ceased.

Without cause, without a shadow of excuse, they proceeded with care and deliberation to sack the city. 'What a lovely place to plunder!' was all the fierce and uncouth old Prussian Blücher could say when he saw London; and if a civilized (save the mark!) soldier could speak thus in 1814, we can imagine the feelings of the brutal, vicious nobles of mediæval France and Burgundy when they found themselves among the wealth for which they had thirsted so long. The Italians were almost as bad. The Venetians behaved worst of all, for they shed more blood than their allies.

No circumstance of horror was spared the unhappy city. Thousands of citizens were murdered in the streets and houses; dwellings were sacked; their female inmates outraged in hideous fashion, and frequently murdered; buildings were destroyed right and left. Sacred edifices fared worse even than private houses; priests were slain, nuns violated. The clergy with the Westerners disgraced themselves and their Church for all time; they took an active part in the pillage, and lifted not a hand to stay the horrors that were going on. The loss to art was beyond calculation; the havoc

done to the cause of civilization by the wanton destruction of priceless books will not bear contemplation. The soldiery burned libraries in their camp-fires, and, though nominal Christians, they held ribald orgies in Hagia Sophia, while prostitutes performed filthy actions and dances on the very altar!

After three days of pillage, outrage, and murder, the leaders made a public distribution of such valuables as remained unplundered, and then collected all the bronze works of art and melted them down for the mint! It is difficult to write of such deeds without indignation. Italians and French alike showed that in 1204 they were barbarians—and barbarians of a very low type. The Turks in 1453 had the excuse that they were fighting hard up to the very moment of their entry into the city, but in 1204 all resistance had ceased long before the sack. The extreme depths of cowardice, greed, lasciviousness, and senseless stupidity, were reached on this occasion; the Westerners may fairly claim to have outdone the Turks. When Pope Innocent heard so much of the truth as filtered through to him, he declared in righteous wrath that no good could ever come of the conquest.

Two-thirds of the splendid city of Constantine were heaps of ashes; all that remained was ruined, stripped bare of everything, naked and desolate; three-fourths of the people had fled or had perished; none but the poorest remained. Baldwin of Flanders was elected Emperor, and received the wrecked capital, Thrace, and the Asiatic provinces. Boniface was at first granted Lydia and Caria, but held out

for Macedonia and Thessaly; he had married the widow of Isaac II. The Venetians claimed a "quarter and half a quarter' of the Empire, which they interpreted as every isle and port that they could seize upon. In their utter ignorance, the leaders drew lots for the Seljuk Sultanate, and for Persia and Assyria! In actual fact everything had to be conquered; the victors held only Constantinople and its district. Kalo-John of Bulgaria was on his way to make his profit out of the dismembered Empire; Alexius III. was still at large in Thrace; Alexius V. was, indeed, captured near the capital, brought, back, and flung from the top of the column of Arcadius—because he had murdered his predecessors! Certainly the filibustering ringleaders had little sense of shame. Nor had they even the honour which is supposed to exist among thieves; 7,000 of the barons and followers went home after the sack; they had gained wealth enough to last them all their life, and saw no reason for undergoing further hardship.

In Asia, Theodore Lascaris was in Nicæa, and several other nobles were at the head of local risings. Alexius Comnenos, who had already made himself practically independent in Trebizond with the help of Thamar, the famous Queen of Georgia, proclaimed himself 'Emperor of the Faithful Romans.' His brother David was active in Bithynia. Wherever a leader arose, the Greek population gathered about him and prepared to fight the destroyers of the City-Queen. Even at this early date it was becoming evident that the Latin Empire of Romania was to be only a simulacrum and a sham. The leaders of

the shameful pirate raid were soon to know disaster, and to pay for their deeds with death and captivity. One of them was past human judgment; Dandolo died soon after the sack. One hopes devoutly that, if there be a hell, torments of especial terror were reserved for him; he may fairly claim to have done more to ruin South-Eastern Europe and Asia Minor, to deliver them over to the Turks, to destroy Christianity in them, and to retard the general progress of civilization, than anyone. Venice, for whom he did such deeds as, if private individuals only were concerned, would debar him from the company of honest men, may honour him; from the rest of the world he deserves nothing but execration.

CHAPTER XIX

EPILOGUE: THE DEATH-AGONY

The Latin and Greek States—Their history—Ignominious end of the Latin Empire—Michael VIII.—Movements in Central Asia, and irresistible advance of Turks—Loss of imperial Asia—Civil war—Servian and Turkish conquests in Europe—Check of Turks by Timúr—Their recovery—Manuel II.—Repulse of Murad II. at Constantinople—John VI.—Attempts to obtain assistance from West—The union of the Churches—Constantine XII.—Mohammed II.—Fall of Constantinople, and final destruction of remains of Empire.

WITH the sack of Constantinople in 1204 the Roman Empire to all intents and purposes came to an end, if, indeed, it had not already practically terminated its career before 1081. Men like Zonaras could see that the Empire of the Comnenoi was not the Empire of Leo III. and Basil II.; its Roman traditions had been lost. But the destruction of the capital finally wrecked any hope of the re-establishment of a really powerful and vigorous state. Under the Comnenoi the Government had steadily tended more and more to become a pure despotism, and the annihilation of the administrative system in the capital broke up the machinery in every part of the Empire. For some years there was anarchy. The Empire was

dismembered; the chiefs who had succeeded in saving parts of it were occupied in defending them; and when they had leisure to form administrations, they were necessarily of a very imperfect description, and one and all based upon feudal or semi-feudal principles, destructive of real stability. Against this must, of course, be set the fact that the Roman law was still enforced. Under a strong ruler the people could be assured of personal justice, and so far the Greek States which emerged from the ruins of the Empire were more healthy than the wretchedly misgoverned kingdoms of the West.

The sack of Constantinople was the signal for a general advance of Bulgarians and Turks. Kalo-John occupied northern Macedonia and Thrace. The Latin Emperor Baldwin was defeated and captured near Adrianople, and never again heard of. In Asia the Seljuks of Rúm overran Pisidia, and captured Attalia and Sinope, but were then checked by Theodore Lascaris, who was established at Nicæa. Alexius III. had already succumbed in Thrace. In Epirus and Albania, Michael Angelos, a bastard cousin of Alexius, had made himself supreme. At Trebizond, Alexius Comnenos had proclaimed himself 'Emperor of the Faithful Romans,' and ruled from Phasis to west of Sinope, while his brother David occupied parts of Bithynia. The Black Sea dependencies were nominally parts of his State; only the southern Crimea appears to have been actually subject.

The Latin Empire, which in 1205 had passed into the hands of Henry, the capable brother of Baldwin, never included anything more than

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THE BOSPHORUS, ABOVE CONSTANTINOPLE.

On the left is Rumelia-Hissar (The Castle of Europe), built by Mohammed II. in 1452, before the last siege of Constantinople, and in the reach beyond Leo III. gained his famous naval victory over the Saracens in 718.

southern Thrace and western Bithynia and Mysia. Bonifacio of Montferrat was slain by the Bulgarians, and his kingdom of Salonica was gradually conquered by Theodore, successor of Michael of Epirus; the capital fell in 1222. The Latin principalities in Greece showed more vitality, and those of Achaia and Athens held their own.

Theodore Lascaris showed great vigour. He first secured himself from the Latins by repulsing them from Prusa, and concluded a truce in 1207. He then extended his sway over the old imperial provinces from Bithynia to Caria, and in 1209 was ready to meet the attack which the Crusading barons induced Kaikhosru of Rúm to make upon him. Theodore pushed boldly forward to meet the Seljuk advance, and at Antioch-on-Mæander completely defeated and slew the Sultan. The Seljuks troubled the new state no more for many years. In 1214 Theodore concluded a favourable treaty with the Latin Emperor Henry, and then attacked David Comnenos of Bithynia, whose state he annexed. Henry, a wise and conciliatory ruler, died in 1217, and with him the only hope of the establishment of a Latin state at Constantinople passed away.

The Venetians reaped many of the benefits so unscrupulously played for. They did not obtain their three-eighths of the Empire; but they seized Crete and many other islands, and a number of ports in Epirus and Greece. The ruin of Constantinople left the trade of the East in their hands; their occupation of the coast towns and the anarchy in the Latin States strangled the sea-commerce of

the Greeks; but they were soon involved in a chronic struggle with the Genoese, who ultimately secured the trade of the Euxine and the Central Asiatic mart.

Theodore Lascaris died in 1222, and was succeeded by his son-in-law, John Dukas Vataces (1222-1254). Meanwhile the Latin Empire steadily went from bad to worse. The lives of the Emperors were a long train of humiliations. Peter of Courtenay was slain by the Albanians with all his army; Robert (1219-1228) and Baldwin II. (1228-1261) lost everything except Constantinople and its district. Vataces conquered all their possessions in Asia except Chalcedon; Theodore Angelos captured Adrianople, and occupied central Thrace. Such territory as they retained was almost deserted, the inhabitants flying to any refuge where they could escape anarchy and feudal cruelty and insolence. The nominal sovereign had no control over the barons; deeds of lawless barbarity were frequent, while industry vanished; revenue could not be raised; and, but for the Venetian command of the sea, the moribund state could not have dragged on its miserable existence as long as it did. In 1230 John of Nicæa conquered southern Thrace, and in 1235 formed an alliance with John Azan, the great King of Bulgaria, and besieged Constantinople. He was repulsed, but then turned against the Angeloi, made them tributary, and in 1246 annexed Thessalonica and its territory. Baldwin II. spent almost his entire reign in wandering about Europe seeking assistance; in 1259 he was actually forced to pledge his son to the Capelli for a small

koan. Considering the origin of the Latin Empire, and the irreparable mischief caused by it, it is impossible not to feel satisfaction at the spectacle of its robber founders and their successors drinking the cup of degradation to the very dregs.

John Dukas of Nicæa died in 1254, having nearly doubled the extent of his dominions, and also put the finances into good order. His opportunities were limited; during the greater part of his reign a powerful sovereign ruled in Bulgaria; but he held his own against him and the Seljuks, and reunited many old imperial districts under his sway. The Greek sea-commerce being ruined, he encouraged agriculture as the mainstay of his realm; on one occasion, when presenting his wife with a valuable coronet, he told her that it had been bought with money realized from the sale of eggs on his private farms. The anecdote bespeaks the true father of his people; at the same time it shows that the economic horizon of the Greek states had been woefully narrowed.

Theodore II. (1254-1258) conquered northern Macedonia from Bulgaria, and gained territory from the Angeloi of Epirus. His son John was thrust aside and blinded in 1260 by the regent Michael Palæologos, who gained a great victory over the Epirotes, Latins of Greece, and Italians in Pelagonia, and firmly established himself as Emperor.

Constantinople was now almost derelict; its walls were held only by the help of the Venetian fleet; within, the Latins could barely collect a little money by wrecking buildings and selling the materials;

hitherto they had sold the sacred relics which the churches still contained. The city was a dreary wilderness; the imperial palaces were so filthy and neglected as to be unfit for occupation. In 1261 the Venetian fleet went to the Ægean on a raid; and General Alexius Strategopoulos Cæsar, commanding in Thrace, entered by the Gate of the Pegé, on the night of July 24-25, with about a thousand men, and put an end to the Latin Empire of Romania. No one can feel a grain of regret at its disappearance; Sir Edwin Pears' crushing condemnation is not too severe. It 'deserves only to be remembered as a gigantic failure, a check to the progress of civilization, a mischievous episode, an abortion among states, born in sin, shapen in iniquity, and dying amid ignominy.'

Unhappily, the mischief which it had wrought could not be repaired. Some simulacrum of an Empire might be re-established, centring at the ruined city of Constantine, but there was no possibility of restoring its past glory. The Asiatic territory was in fair condition, but that in Europe had been wasted and depopulated. The cities had decayed; the great sea-borne commerce had mostly passed to foreign hands; the splendid administrative system was in ruins. Everything had to be rebuilt from the very foundation, and materials for the reconstruction hardly existed. The task might have appalled Heraclius or Leo III.; and Michael VIII., though active and able, was not by any means a ruler of a high order, and was suspicious, treacherous, and timid. In 1269 he regained a number of the smaller Ægean islands, having previously recovered

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THE FIFTH (PEMPTON) MILITARY GATE.

PLATE XXXI

southern Laconia; but in Asia his suspicious timidity induced him to break up the frontier militia (which was anti-Palæologan in its sympathies), and thereby leave the way open for the Turks, who were, for reasons which must be briefly alluded to, again spreading westward. He was hampered by his relations with the Genoese and Venetians, and by the unfriendly attitude of the Church on account of his treatment of John IV. The Seljuk Emirates united to assail him, and encroached upon his Asiatic borders. They made no especial progress until late in his reign, but in 1282 they attacked and destroyed Tralles. The result was that, though in Europe the border was at the line of Hæmus, and though in Greece progress had been made, in Asia, the most vigorous part of the Empire, ruin was at hand. Michael made a fruitless effort to consummate the impracticable union of the Eastern and Western Churches, and died in 1282.

In the midst of the disorder caused by the establishment of the Latin 'abortion' at Constantinople, a great westward movement of Central Asiatics under Mongol lead was in progress. In 1206 the Khalkha Mongols elected Temud Shin their Lord of Lords (Genghiz Khan), and by 1227 he had extended his sway to the Dnieper. In 1239 the great general Subutai Khan extinguished the independence of Russia; in 1258 Hulagu, grandson of Genghiz Khan, captured Baghdad, ended the Abbasid Khalifate, and then broke up the Seljuk Sultanate of Rúm. Many of his followers, chiefly Turks, settled or remained in Asia Minor, among them a small horde under Ertogrul. Ertogrul was

succeeded, about 1280, by his son Othman. After this Turkish progress was steady.

Andronicus II., son of Michael VIII., enlisted the services of a Spanish mercenary army, under a German ruffian named Blum, called Roger de Flor, which temporarily repelled the advancing Turks, but whose lawlessness was such that it was soon involved in a war with its employers. While this internecine struggle, which ruined great part of Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece, was in progress, the Turks inundated the already wasted Asiatic provinces. They were often defeated, but to no purpose; the disorder in Asia, the pressure of the Mongol advance, insured their continual reinforcement by fresh immigrants. The cities were isolated by the presence of the nomads, and slowly starved or weakened into submission. In 1299 Othman took the title of Sultan, and established himself in Bithynia; in 1308 Ephesus surrendered, and in 1326, after a partial blockade of ten years, Brussa. Tartar hordes also invaded the European provinces, but these were repelled; and while steadily losing territory in Asia, Andronicus II. conquered Thessaly from the Vlachs in 1308, and encroached on Epirus. Andronicus III. (1329-1341) lost Nicomedia and Nicæa to Orkhan, the successor of Othman, but, though his Asiatic domain had almost vanished, completed the conquest of Epirus and made progress in Greece. Andronicus's death was followed by a long civil struggle between the supporters of his son John V. (1341-1391) and John Cantacuzenos (1342-1355), during which the Turks gained ground with ease, mixed in the quarrels of the warring

Greek rulers, and succeeded in thoroughly ruining Thrace; while Stephen Dushan of Servia occupied Macedonia, Thessaly, and Epirus, and threatened to seize Thessalonica. The net result of external wars and civil broils extending over a century was that, in 1373, John V.—now, by the abdication of Cantacuzenos, sole ruler—became the vassal of Murad I., the successor of Orkhan. Murad was a fanatical Mohammedan, and gave his followers that tinge of religious intolerance which completed the hatefulness of their national character. Barbarians of a low type they had always been, but easy-going and tolerant. Murad gave his heavy, clumsy barbarian weapon the fine edge of Mohammedan fanaticism, and carried forward the organization of the terrible 'New Troops'—the famous Janissaries. He forced John to help him to take Philadelphia, the last independent imperial city in Asia Minor (1379). In 1387 he took Thessalonica, and in 1389 gained a complete victory over the Servians on Kossovo-Pol, near Uskub, though himself slain by treachery. He was succeeded by his son Bayazid I., and in 1391 Manuel II. succeeded his wretched father at Constantinople.

For ten years Bayazid kept the city in constant terror of siege. Manuel made a tour in Europe to obtain assistance, but with little result; but in 1402 came a sudden turn of Fortune's wheel. The great Turkish conqueror Timúr came down upon Asia Minor, and defeated and captured Bayazid at Angora. He pushed on to Smyrna, which he captured and sacked, and wasted Asia Minor with horrible barbarity. The Ottoman Empire was shattered

and by taking advantage of the dynastic struggles between Bayazid's sons Manuel recovered parts of Thrace and Greece, and Thessalonica. He assisted Mohammed I. (1413-1420) to recover his father's dominions, and remained on friendly terms with him until his death. He would have maintained peace also with Mohammed's successor Murad II., but he was now more than seventy years of age, and was overruled by the Senate, which thought the opportunity favourable, and compelled the aged Emperor to associate with him his son John VII., the leader of the war-party. Then, in June, 1422, Murad besieged Constantinople; but, though he brought cannon into play against the walls, he was kept at bay, and bloodily repulsed in a great assault on August 24. The garrison followed up the Turks in their retreat, and captured some of their guns. Murad's withdrawal had been caused by dynastic troubles; the success was clearly only temporary; it was Constantinople's last victory over the barbarians whom she had withstood for eleven centuries. John's warlike ardour cooled, and he made peace, paying tribute, and retaining such territory as remained to him—south-east Thrace from Silivria to Mesembria; Thessalonica; Imperial Morea; Lemnos, Imbros, Thasos, and Samothrace. Thessalonica was lost in 1428 to the Venetians, from whom Murad speedily took it, and there remained only about 12,000 square miles of territory, mostly wasted and useless, of the wide dominions of the Roman Emperors of the East.

Manuel died in 1425, at the age of seventy-seven. John passed his reign chiefly in desperate attempts

to procure help from the West. Despite the ill-will of the clergy and people, he finally, in 1440, concluded the union of the Churches. The results were disastrous ; he lost the confidence of his subjects, and gained no substantial assistance. The Pope, though willing, could do little ; Venice and Genoa were selfish and indifferent. Venice would not understand that the crime of 1204 had shattered the defence of Europe, and that she would soon be forced to cringe to the Turk. Constantine, the Emperor's brother, who held a semi-independent position in the Morea, gained several successes over the Turks, but was finally defeated by Murad in person ; and though the latter was repulsed from Kroya in Albania by the famous George Castriotes (Iskender Bey), he gained a great victory over John Hunyadi on Kossovo-Pol (October 18, 1448). John died of grief. He was succeeded by his gallant brother, Constantine XII., the last Christian sovereign of Constantinople, and in 1451 the great Murad was succeeded by his greater son, Mohammed II., the conqueror and law-giver, strange combination of student, warrior, sensualist, legislator, and bloodthirsty savage, the mightiest of Ottoman rulers. His resolution was fixed from the outset to conquer Constantinople ; the Emperor gave a pretext by a rash demand for an increase in the subsidy which he received for the maintenance of Mohammed's kinsman and possible rival, Orkhan. Mohammed built a great fortress, Rumelia Hissar, on Constantine's territory near the capital, massacred the inhabitants around, refused all redress, and on April 6, 1453, besieged Constantinople by land and sea.

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Part of the population of the city had fled; it contained not more than 90,000 inhabitants, of whom Phrantzes informs us that only 4,983 Greeks and 2,000 foreigners were fighting men. This seems incredible, but it is confirmed by independent testimony; no account speaks of more than 6,000 Greeks and 3,000 foreigners, including Genoese volunteers from Galata. The command under the Emperor was held by Giovanni Justiniani, a Genoese noble, who had come on his own account to the doomed city with two ships and 700 men. He did not, unhappily, agree very well with the Grand-Duke Lucas Notaras, the Greek commander, and the Venetians and Genoese also quarrelled. It does not seem that the Genoese of Galata, as a whole, were guilty of treachery, but some certainly were. The great Inner Wall was ruinous; there were few cannon, and such as they were the ramparts could not endure the shock of their recoil; the garrison was utterly inadequate. There were ships enough to defend the harbour, but not to take the offensive; arms and military stores were lacking. Appeals for help to Europe had little result. John Hunyadi and the King of Aragon bargained for reward from the scanty possessions of the Empire. Venice would not stir, but Pope Nicholas V. did his best to collect a fleet. Three Genoese ships were sent in advance, and thirty others were to follow.

Mohammed had collected for the great attempt a host of 12,000 Janissaries, 70,000 regulars, and 60,000 irregulars, with a fleet of fifteen large galleys and seventy smaller ones, besides hundreds of boats and barges. He had a huge siege-park, but by far

his most tremendous weapon was his train of artillery. In all he is said to have had 200 guns, of which sixty were of large calibre, ten enormous, and one a 1,200-pounder of 46-inch calibre, which surpassed all records in gun-making until the nineteenth century. With this fearful disparity of force and armament, it is astonishing that any serious resistance was made, and yet it is quite clear that there were times when the garrison appeared to have the advantage.

Mohammed directed his main attack at the weak point in the city's defences, where the walls dip down into the Lycus valley. There he stationed himself with his Janissaries and other picked troops under Halil and Saraja Pashas, and his heaviest artillery. Isaac and Mahmúd Pashas, with the Asiatic troops, attacked the triple wall towards the Golden Gate, while Karaja Pasha and the European levies assailed those towards the Golden Horn; and a fourth force, under Zagan Pasha, blockaded Galata. The fleet, under Baltoglu, a Bulgarian renegade, lay at Double Columns (Dolmabagché), and Mohammed, seeing the danger of forcing the harbour in face of the squadron which lay at the boom, began to construct a tramway for the transport of his lighter vessels into the Upper Golden Horn. On April 12 the batteries opened fire; and at once it appeared that the walls, which had so long withstood every assault, could not stand against the weapons of the Turk. Breaches began to appear, and the defenders could only toil day and night to repair them. On the 18th the damage already done was so great that Mohammed

ordered an assault. It was repulsed with heavy loss by Justiniani, and a simultaneous attack on the boom by the fleet was also repelled by Notaras. On April 20 the three Genoese ships aforesaid, with an imperial vessel under Captain Flatanelas, reached the city, and fought their way in through the entire Turkish fleet. They reached Seraglio Point, and were then becalmed, but beat off every attack of the vessels swarming around, until a breeze sprang up, and then cleared a way for themselves, despite all that the Turks could do. Mohammed was beside himself with rage, and disgraced and flogged Baltoglu.

On the 22nd the Turkish shipway was ready, and seventy vessels of various sorts were hauled into the upper harbour. An attempt was made to destroy them on April 28, but it was betrayed by someone in Galata and beaten off. Mohammed massacred his prisoners, and thereupon Constantine retaliated by hanging the Turks whom he had taken. No news came from without; the steady bombardment never ceased. A light vessel was sent under Turkish colours to look for the relieving fleet, and a proposal was made that the Emperor should escape. Constantine steadily refused; he declared that he would never abandon his comrades; if death must be, he would die with them. It was a reply worthy of the last representative of the majesty of Rome.

On May 7 an assault was repulsed, and on the 12th another determined attack near the Adrianople Gate was gallantly beaten back. Attempts on the boom all ended in failure, but the scanty garrison

was worn out with constant alarms. The battering at the walls in the Lycus vale went on continually, and a huge breach gaped for 1,200 feet. Elsewhere serious damage had been wrought; men, women, and children, toiled night and day to repair the walls—in vain.

On May 23 the scout-vessel came back; she had seen nothing of a relieving fleet. One or two of her little crew of twelve had spoken of saving themthemselves; but the others would not hear of it. 'Whatever our fate may be, it is our duty to return!' was their proud decision, and the little craft made sail for the doomed city.

On May 28 it was evident that a final assault was at hand. Mohammed had made up his mind that everything must be risked to forestall aid from the West. He made the usual appeals of a Turk and a Mohammedan to the ferocious horde which he led. They might take everything in the city; he would keep only the empty buildings. In the city a solemn service was held in Hagia Sophia; the tragic pathos of the event has often been dwelt upon. After service Constantine called nobles and officers together in Blachernæ, and solemnly asked pardon of all whom he had offended.

In the darkness of early morning on May 29 the barbarian host attacked. The horde of irregulars first flung itself at the walls, but was repelled again and again with great slaughter, being flogged and sabred back to repeated attacks by bodies of Janissaries and police. Next the Anatolian corps assaulted the stockaded breach in the valley of the Lycus, where the Emperor and Justiniani captained

the defence. Zagan and Karaja furiously assaulted the walls to the north, but were beaten off; while attack after attack at the breach was successfully repelled. Three hundred Turks actually penetrated the stockade, but were mostly killed, and the rest driven out.

The duration of the desperate contest was telling fearfully upon the handful of defenders. A little after dawn the Janissaries and the Sultanic Guards came on. So furious was their fire that the defenders could not show themselves, and under its cover the Janissaries charged the breach—'grand masters and brave men,' says the Venetian Barbaro, 'who fought like lions,' and outnumbered the defenders by six to one. And yet before the splendid resistance of the grander masters and braver men who held the breach the assault of the Janissaries, magnificent, invincible, brave as lions, led by officers worthy of them, was stayed and brought to a stand. But Justiniani was severely wounded and left his post, and for a moment the defence slackened. Constantine rallied his followers, sent in his little bodyguard, and placed himself at their head, but it was too late. Mohammed threw his last *ortas* into the fray and led the assault, and the blood-stained breach was his. The remains of the garrison fought to the death on the esplanade between the walls. In the front of their line was the Emperor Constantine, with Theophilus Palæologos and John Dalmata on his left, and Don Francisco Alvarez de Toledo at his right; he flung away his imperial insignia lest the Turks should recognize and capture him. His companions fell,

. sword in hand, amid the oncoming crowd of issaries and Sipahis, Constantine met the end t befitted a Roman Emperor and a faithful dier of Christ.

There is little more. The pitiful story of sack l massacre has been told so often; why enlarge the story of Turkish bestiality? One must ak, as a matter of duty, of the foul deeds of estors and co-religionists; but things which dis- ce civilized men are to this day the pleasure and ry of Turks. The Venetian and Genoese ships ich had aided in the defence stayed to the last ment in the harbour, and saved all whom they ld; such imperial ships as were manned seem to e done the same. Some gallant Cretans held in three towers, and surrendered on honourable ms; some hundreds of the garrison got on board ships; a few more escaped to Galata. The rkish seamen left their ships absolutely empty in ir thirst for blood and rapine, but the harbour's uth was blocked by the boom. Two desperate ors of Admiral Diedo's galley sprang overboard l hacked through the chain; and one by one the netian ships, seven Genoese and some Greek ssels got outside and escaped. As they drew ay across the Propontis to the Hellespont and ety, they left to the mercy of the barbarians of ia the great city, which from that day to this has en, in the prophet's vivid words, 'an abomination desolation' where truth and mercy, justice and ace, have never been.

Mohammed conquered Trebizond in 1464, the ond 'Empire' of his boasting chroniclers; the

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Morea had already fallen into his hands, and with it the last fractions of Roman territory in the East passed from civilization. For nearly 500 years the Turk has made his sty among the ruins of the City of Constantine, but the end is not yet.

CHAPTER XX

BYZANTINE SOCIETY—THE EMPIRE'S PLACE IN HISTORY

UPON the whole, it may be said that the society of the late Roman Empire has received more unmixed and misplaced condemnation than that of any other state of which we possess the records. Voltaire called it 'a worthless repertory of miracles, degrading to the human mind.' Gibbon, as antichristian as Voltaire, practically echoes him, though more guardedly; Lecky is more blameworthy than either, since he not only launches a series of unfounded charges, but makes an appeal to a non-existent universal verdict of history in support of them.

A common fault among historians, as the writer thinks them, is to study and describe Court society under the impression that it is the reflex of that of the nation. Nothing can be farther from the truth. Court life neither reflects that of the people, nor does it influence it except in a very slight degree; it was, and is, and will be apart from it; courtiers live in a little world of their own.

Court society in the Byzantine Empire was, we

are frequently assured, corrupt and vicious. That may well be the case; Satan always finds mischief for idle hands, and the average Court is very idle—busy doing nothing. No doubt Byzantine courtiers were as idle, corrupt, and vicious, as the courtiers of every age, not excepting our own, are likely to be. A good deal of abuse is often levelled at the Court ceremonial and the employment of eunuchs. The latter feature is one peculiarly repulsive to the modern European mind, but the eunuchs as a class seem to have been good public servants. As regards the Court ceremonial, there is no reason to think that the Emperors usually insisted upon its observance, except on state occasions; and, after all, the difference between it and that of modern England or Germany is only in degree. I doubt very much whether Constantinopolitan news-writers were more fulsomely adulatory of their Emperors than journalists to-day—speaking of personages who have little of kingship about them save their sounding titles—often are.

Be this as it may, though Byzantine Court society was no worse, and often better, than many of which I have read and heard, I consider it utterly dissociated from that of the people. Nor do I see that the Eastern Empire had a 'taint of weakness derived from its Oriental origin'; its peoples as a whole were not by any means weak or degenerate; the elaborate and gorgeous Court, with its degrading ceremonial, was the outcome of the ideas of a Western Roman Emperor of peasant birth!

It is highly probable that Constantinopolitan Court life was far from being unmitigatedly bad. The nobles who surrounded and often influenced the Emperor were for the most part busy public men—statesmen, soldiers, administrators. They might often be intriguers; doubtless there were many bad men among them, but they were not the idle debauchees who surrounded Charles II. of England or Louis XV. of France. However exaggerated, and, as regards monachism, ill-founded, their religious ideas might be, they were usually sincere; both Iconoclasts and Iconodules were ready to suffer for their belief; more than one Byzantine noble laid down his life rather than abjure his faith.

Religious spirit was certainly strong. The Church, despite its faults and errors, rendered yeoman service in holding together the many races of the Empire. Religious controversy may have filled a disproportionate part of the East Roman's intellectual horizon; but, seeing that it was the one theme which could be discussed freely with full knowledge, this was inevitable; probably religious dogma is fully as elevating a subject for discussion as the paltry party political squabbles, which are the chief topic of conversation in England to-day. So, too, with sport. True, the British factions have never named themselves 'Ruggers' and 'Soccers,' but, as a matter of taste, it might be as well, since 'Tory' signifies a brigand, and 'Whig' a whey-face; and otherwise party politicians find it convenient to pander to the craze for watching football matches. Perhaps the chariot races of the Hippodrome occu-

pied too large a part of the Constantinopolitan citizens' time, but it is doubtful; and no one born in horse-racing, prize-fighting, cock-fighting, bear-baiting England can for shame cast stones at them. Englishmen do not, as a whole, take delight in witnessing savage sports—though this was not the case in the past—but they are not in essence very much above the Roman of the fourth century who, very likely in most cases after a hard day's work, went to see a score or so of slaves kill each other, since they flock by tens of thousands to see twenty-two hired men kick a ball about.

Patriotism, in the modern sense of the word, hardly existed. The races of the Empire were so various that it was impossible that it should be otherwise. Religious feeling compensated for it in some respect, but on the whole it consisted only in local attachment. The general tone of society was democratic; ability was the one necessary passport to office and Court society. It is also worthy of notice that the people commonly had the last word—a fact strange to those who regard the government as a mere crushing despotism. On several occasions we hear of them interfering in public affairs, generally with success, and on the whole very much to their credit. When the issue was plain, the so-called weak, degenerate, servile populace of Constantinople expressed itself with great decision, and was very ready to shed its blood liberally for a popular sovereign; the infrequency of popular rebellion is a testimony to general well-being and good goverment, not to servility. The idea that the populations of the Empire were weak and

MEDALLIONS OF JUSTINIAN I. AND OF JOHN VII. PALÆOLOGOS (REDUCED).

The great gold medallion of Justinian has disappeared, but there is a cast in the British Museum. It bears what appears to be a genuine portrait of the Emperor. The date would be about 533.

The medallion of John Palæologos, by Pisano, is the one absolutely reliable portrait of a Byzantine Emperor which we possess. Date 1439.

degenerate is flatly contradicted by the general character of its rulers, of whom a large majority were of humble origin, and whose general level of ability, energy, and public spirit, as well as morality, was high. From 395 to 1204 a great crisis never failed to produce the requisite strong man, a convincing proof that there was plenty of good material in the people and the public services.

Treachery, cowardice, luxury, frivolity, immorality, and cruelty, are commonly supposed to be the characteristic Byzantine vices. Treachery, after all, was attributed by Romans to Greeks and Phœnicians; but the record of the supposedly honest Roman is so that his testimony is worthless; and treachery and bad deceit must, I fear, be attributed, more or less, to every diplomatist since diplomatists were. Probably, in dealing with foreign powers, the Byzantine Government was neither better nor worse than governments usually are—that is to say, of course, very bad and contemptible; but whether Greeks, Slavs, Armenians, Phrygians, and Isaurians, were generally treacherous is another matter. As to cowardice, I have certainly written to small purpose if I have not shown that it was decidedly not a besetting Byzantine vice.

The charges of luxury and frivolity are the easiest of all to bring. Frivolity was doubtless as common in the Empire as it is everywhere. There was much luxury, no doubt, often vulgar and tasteless, among those who could afford it—Romania in these respects much resembled modern England, France, Germany, or America. John Chrysostom had much to say upon the wickedness of his times, but one finds that

it showed itself mainly in sufficiently trifling fashion. The writer fears that, if all his female acquaintances who make the best of their natural advantages be bad, he hardly knows a single estimable woman, but he is quite prepared to set his judgment on this point against Chrysostom's. That there was much immorality in the cities is probable. Constantinople and her humbler sisters resembled great modern cities in this respect, but there is not the smallest reason to believe that the people at large were otherwise than moral, sober, and industrious.

The charge of cruelty is often brought against the imperial administration. There were a good many isolated acts of barbarity, and more than one Emperor employed grim methods of terrorizing or coercing rebels. But then, only two centuries ago criminals in England were cut down half strangled from the gibbet to be disembowelled and dismembered, and women were burnt alive for witchcraft. On the Continent up to a much later date punishments were far more barbarous even than this, the horrible torture of breaking on the wheel being common in France and Germany. The nations of modern Europe are the Pharisees of history, but even they can hardly venture to cast dirt at the Eastern Empire on this charge.

To gain a proper impression of Byzantine society, it must be compared with those existing contemporaneously with it. As we make our way through its troubled history, we cannot but feel that we are dealing with a civilized community. There is a highly elaborated governmental system, a complex and intricate social order. Commerce and industry

flourish, and are ordinarily and generally pursued as a means of livelihood; life and property are secure and carefully protected. Whatever forms of vice be secretly indulged in, immorality is stringently legislated against, and it is condemned by the popular voice. Many of the worst features of pagan society—infanticide, for example—have disappeared; others, notably slavery, have enormously diminished. Though the State is commonly, and indeed incessantly, fighting for existence, militarism is not rampant; 'the bully in his boots' does not 'hide the march of men from us.' War is carried on in astonishingly humane fashion; not merely are the troops cared for as troops have not been in Europe down to the nineteenth century, but cruelty to enemies is the exception, and not the rule; there is a regular cartel for exchange of prisoners; the latter are, indeed, often reduced to slavery, but facilities are given for redemption. Instruction, in the cities at least, is common. There are institutions for higher education; if there are too many monasteries, and an ecclesiastic tone often pervades society, there are hospitals and orphanages everywhere. When we find a Postmaster-General and a Minister of Charitable Institutions among the officials, we feel that we are indeed in a state which, with all its faults, is civilized in the true sense of the word.

The one state of Byzantine times which, like it, was founded upon several ancient civilizations was the Saracen Khalifate, and no one who compares the two can doubt for a moment that, for all its ephemeral and meretricious splendour, the Empire was greatly its superior. The Ummeyad and Abbasid Khalifs

showed all the characteristics of barbarism; the best of them could not maintain order in their dominions. Their statesmanship and administration were crude and ineffective; their culture was distinctly superficial; it is more than probable that they owed much of it to the despised 'Greeks' of New Rome. The Khalifate stood for war, and even in war it was not successful in the long run against the Eastern Empire. To compare Byzantine society with the chaotic barbarism of Western Europe is merely absurd. Immorality of a kind which was warred against at Constantinople was rife among the upper classes in the West, whose ignorance of all things save war, rapine, and hunting, was profound and pitiable. Female drunkenness was common. Charles the Great, a man far in advance of his times in most things, lived openly with several concubines at one time; his court was full of gross licentiousness. Kings like Alfred the Great of England were rare. The chivalry of which so much is made shows itself, on examination, to have been a very paltry thing, after all—chiefly class prejudice, in fact. No one and nothing were safe against feudal violence. In the thirteenth century in England, a body of gentlemen rode forth and deliberately sacked Boston during a great fair. Trade and commerce hardly existed; the utmost efforts could not wring a modest revenue from the miserable population. Prosperity in the West would have been the depth of wretchedness in the Eastern Empire. Even when the administration of the law was best, it was fearfully barbarous; as a rule, anarchy reigned with slight check.

The Empire's Place in History

The task accomplished by the much-maligned Eastern Empire was the most vitally important, the most glorious, and the most thankless, that a nation could achieve. For two centuries, while the old majestic order crumbled away in the West, it remained a centre of peaceful culture. For 800 years it was the shield of Europe. Heraclius beat back the great westward advance of the new Persian Empire—an advance not less dangerous than that of the old. His descendants made good the defence of Europe's eastern gate against the raging torrent of Mohammedanism. Leo III. hurled it back beyond Taurus, and gained five centuries wherein the European states might make some small progress towards strength and solidity. Much is said to-day of the splendour of European civilization. Some—the writer among them—believe that it is largely material and superficial, and out of all proportion to the actual moral progress made ; but such as it is it owes its existence to the desperate fight waged by Rome's Eastern Empire against the barbarian hordes which were pressing from the East. In an age of utter darkness the Empire preserved the traditious of science, art, and literature ; and seeing how badly its works have suffered at barbarian hands, and that its best blood was needed for the vital tasks of defence and administration, we are not justified in stating that they were of slight merit. For many centuries it provided for the security and well-being of its people, in a manner that has not been equalled in Western Europe until very late times. During the whole period of its existence it waged a bitter struggle against the

enemies of all that is best in the world ; and when at last its time came, when its realm had almost dwindled to the walls of its capital, it died as it had lived, deserted and betrayed, but in its last agony, as in the days of its splendour and glory, the rear-guard of Christian civilization.

EASTERN ROMAN SOVEREIGNS FROM A.D. 395.

	'Legitimate' Sovereign. (No Fixed Rule.)		Co-Regent Sovereigns (excluding Associated Relatives).		Temporary Usurpers.
Theodosian Dynasty.	Arcadius	395			
	Theodosius II. ...	408	Pulcheria ...	414-453	
	Marcianus ...	450			
	Leo I., the Thracian	457			
	Leo II.	474			
	Zeno	474			Basiliscus, 475-477.
	Anastasius I. ..	491			
Dardanian or Anician Dynasty.	Justinus I. ...	518			
	Justinianus I. ...	527	(Theodora I....	527-548)	
	Justinus II. ...	565	Sophia ...	565-578	
	Tiberius II. ...	578			
	Mauricius ...	582			
	Phocas	602			
Heraclian or Second African Dynasty.	Heraclius I. ...	610			
	Constantinus III.	641			
	Heraclius II. ...	641-2			
	Constantinus IV. ('Constans II.')	642			
	Constantinus V....	668			
	Justinianus II. ...	695			
	Leontius	695			
	Tiberius III. ...	698			
	Justinianus II. (restored)	705			
	Philippicus ...	711			
	Anastasius II. ...	713			
	Theodosius III....	716			
'Isaurian' or Second Syrian Dynasty.	Leo III.	717			
	Constantinus VI.	740			Artavasdos, 741-742.
	Leo IV.	775			
	Constantinus VII.	780	Irene... ...	779-791	
	Irene	797			
Arabian Dynasty.	Nicephorus I. ...	802			Vardan.
	Stavrakios ...	811			
	Michael I. ...	811			
	Leo V., the Armenian	813			

EASTERN ROMAN SOVEREIGNS—*Continued.*

		'Legitimate' Sovereign. (No Fixed Rule.)		Co-Regent Sovereigns (excluding Associated Relatives).		Temporary Usurpers.
? Amorian Dynasty.	Amorian Dynasty.	Michael II. ...	820			Thomas the Slav, 820-823.
		Theophilus ...	829			
		Michael III. ...	842	Theodora ...	842-857	
	Basilian or Macedonian Dynasty.	Basilius I. ...	867			
		Leo VI.	886			
		Alexander ...	912			
		Constantinus VIII.	913	Zoe I. ..	915-919	
		Romanus II. ...	959	Romanus I.	919-944	Bardas Skleros, 976-989.
		Basilius II. ...	963	Nicephorus II.	963-969	Bardas Phokas, 976-989.
				Johannes I. ...	969-976	
		Constantinus IX.	1025	Romanus III.	1028-1034	
		Zoe II.	1028	Michael IV.	1034-1041	
				Michael V.	1041-1042	
				Constantinus X.	1042-1054	
		Theodora III. ...	1054			
		Michael VI. ...	1056			
		Isaac I. (Comnenos)	1057			
	Dukainian Dynasty.	Constantinus XI.	1059			
		Michael VII. ...	1067	Eudocia ...	1067-1071	
				Romanus IV.	1067-1071	
		Nicephorus III. (Botaniates) ...	1078			Nicephorus Bryennios.
	Comnenian Dynasty.	Alexius I. ...	1081			
		Johannes II. ...	1118			
		Manuel I. ...	1143			
		Alexius II. ...	1180	Maria ...	1180-1183	
		Andronicus I. ...	1183			
	Angelan Dynasty.	Isaac II.	1185			Isaac Comnenos (in Cyprus.)
		Alexius III. ...	1195			
		Isaac II. (restored)	1203			
		Alexius IV. ...	1203			
		Alexius V. (Dukas)	1204			

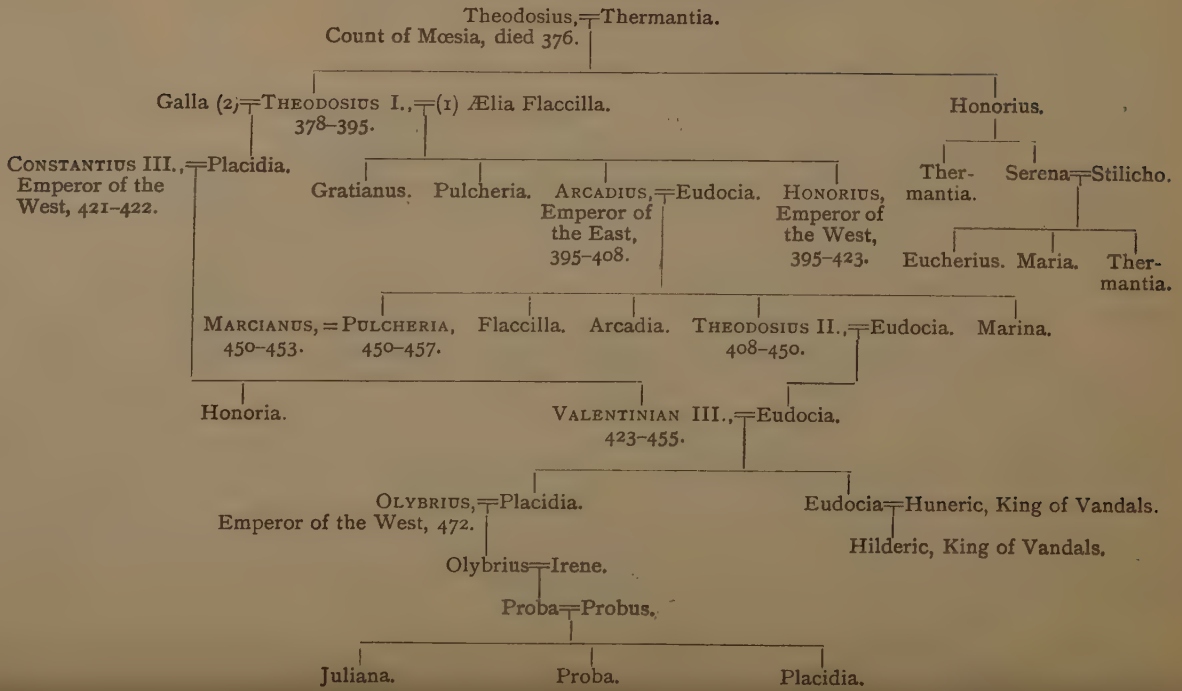
THE POLYARCHY.

Empire of Nicæa.	Empire of Thessalonica.	Empire of Trebezond.	Latin Empire.
Theodoros I. 1204	Bonifacio of Montferrat.	Alexius Comnenos ... 1204	Baldwin I. ... 1204
Johannes III. 1222	Michael Angelos.	Andronicus Gidos ... 1222	Henry ... 1205
Theodoros II. 1254	Theodoros Angelos.	Johannes Comnenos 1235	Peter ... 1216
Johannes IV. 1259	Johannes Angelos (submitted to Johannes III. of Nicæa).	Manuel Comnenos ... 1238	Robert ... 1219
		Johannes Comnenos (Line continued to 1464.)	Baldwin II.... 1228 (Conquered by Nicæa, 1260.)

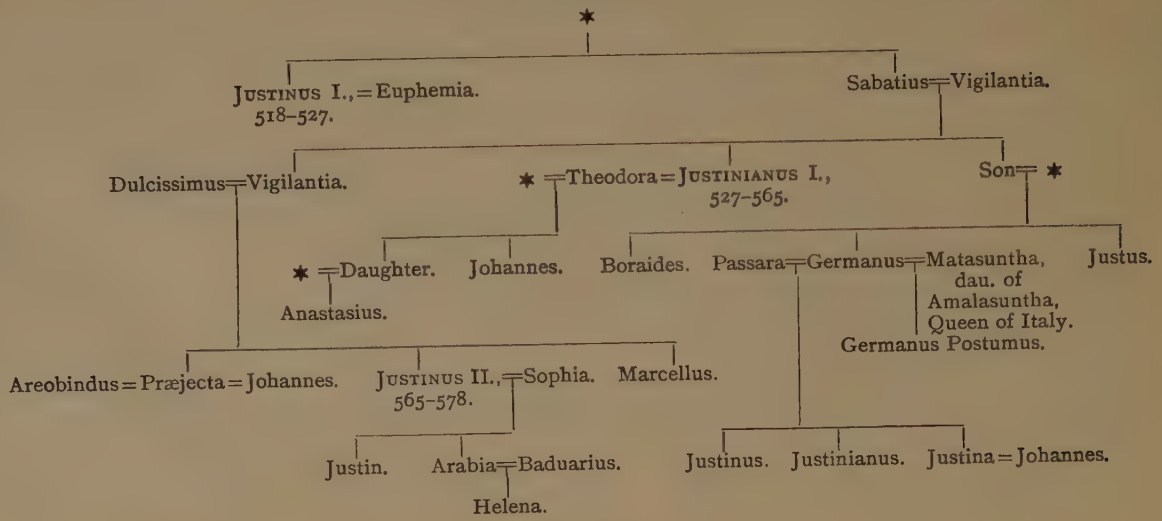
Greek Empire of Constantinople :

Michael VIII.	1260
Andronicus II. ...	1282
Andronicus III. ...	1328
Johannes V.	1341
Co-Regent, Johannes VI.	1347-54
Manuel II.	1391
Johannes VII.	1425
Constantinus XII. ...	1448-53

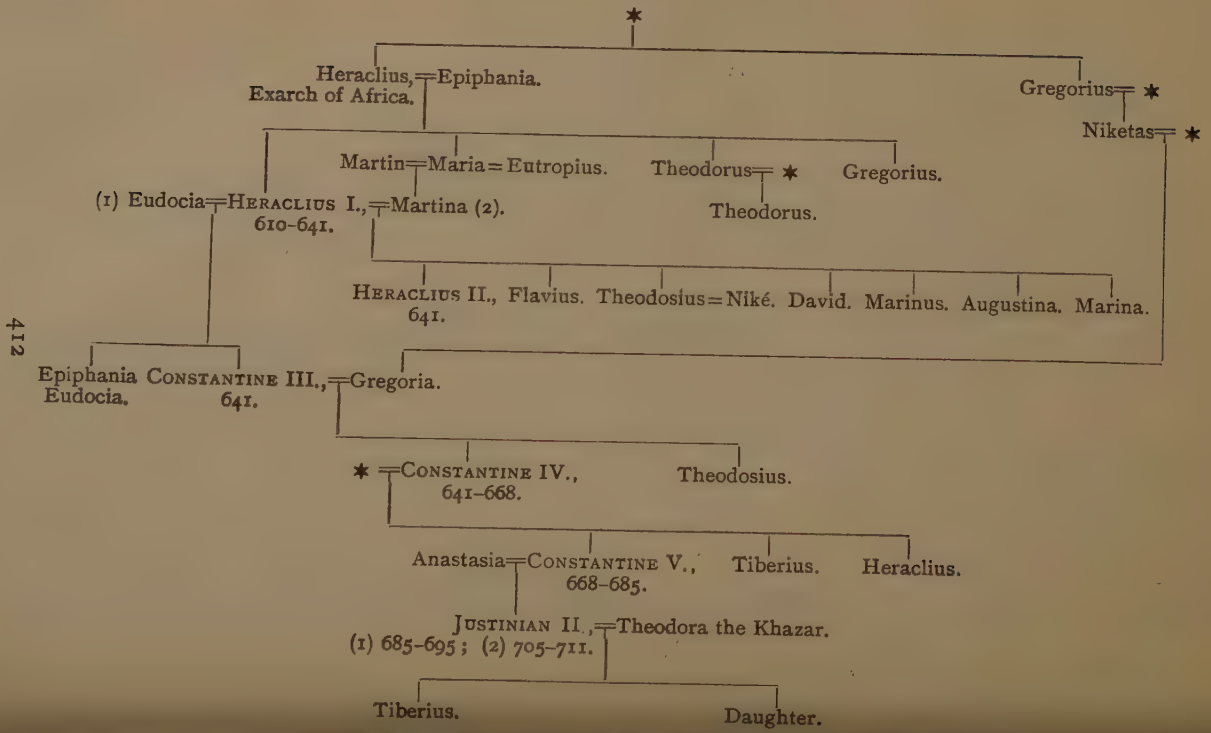
I. THE HOUSE OF THEODOSIUS.



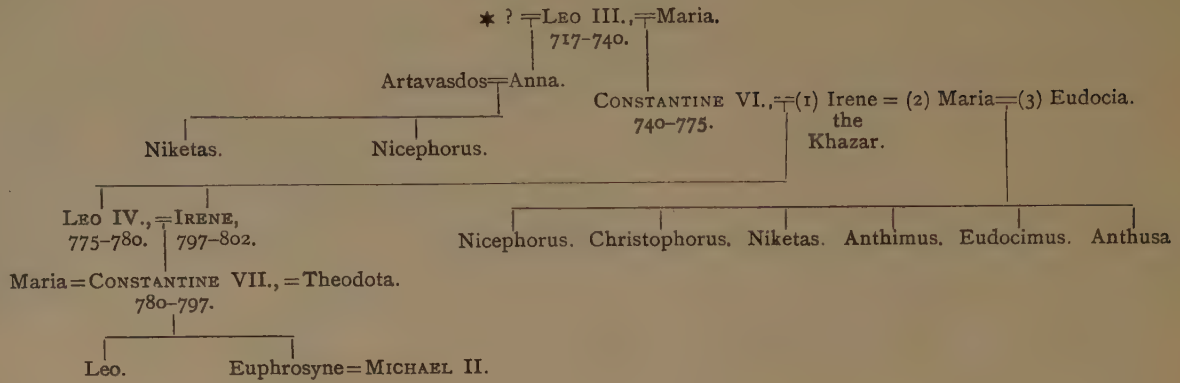
II. THE DARDANIAN HOUSE.



III. THE HERACLIADS.



IV. THE ISAURIANS.



V. THE AMORIANS AND MACEDONIANS.

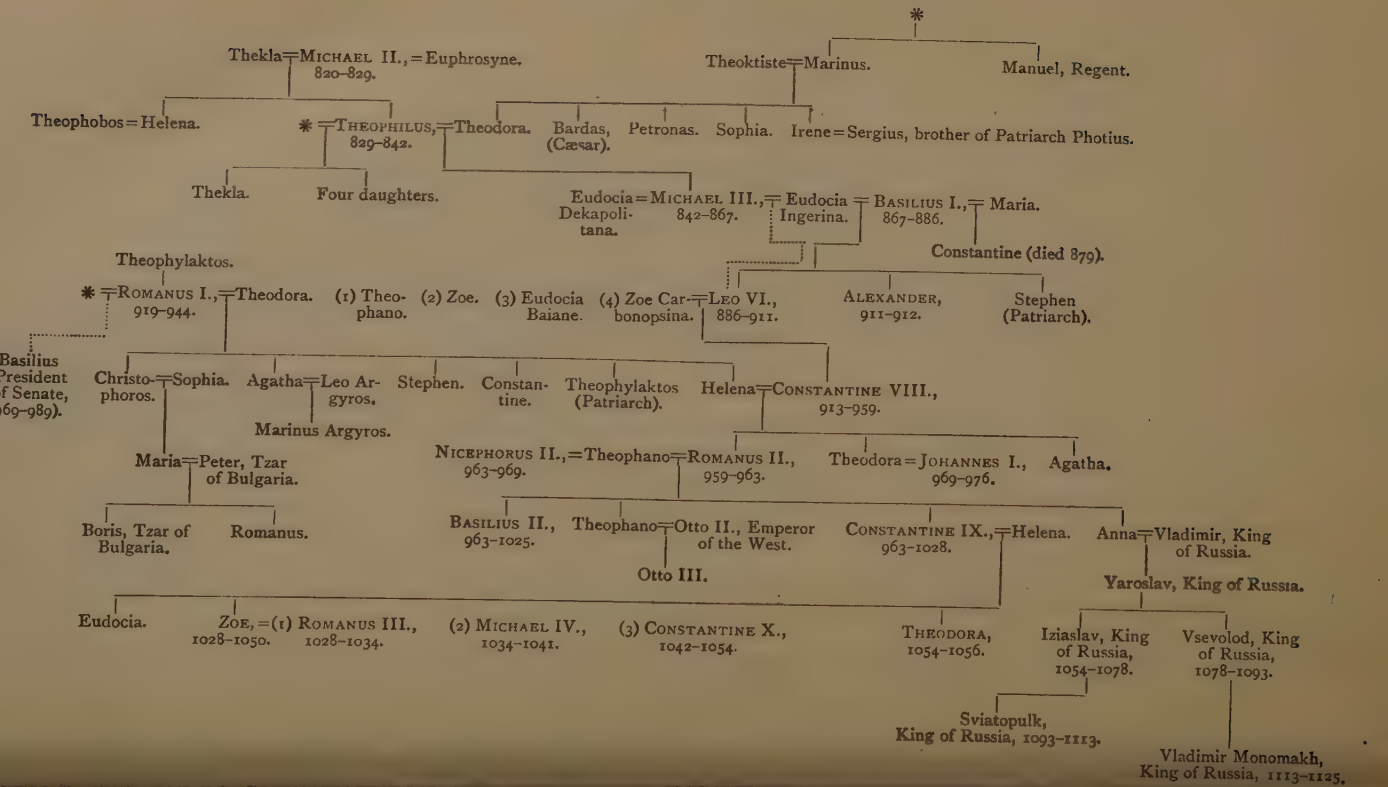


TABLE I

THE ROMAN EMPIRE IN A.D. 395.

The Western Empire.

	Area, Square Miles.	Population.*
Britannia	56,000	3,000,000
Gallia	250,000	15,000,000
Hispania	230,000	12,000,000
Italia	118,000	10,000,000
Pannonia, Dalmatia, Rhætia, Noricum	116,000	10,000,000
Africa	140,000	5,000,000
Totals	910,000	55,000,000

The Eastern Empire.

	Area, Square Miles.	Population.
Thrace, Macedonia, Mœsia, Hellas	165,000	12,000,000
Asia Minor	214,000	32,000,000
Cilicia, Commagene, and Cyprus	36,000	5,000,000
Armenia and Colchis	20,000	1,500,000
Mesopotamia	20,000	1,500,000
Syria	80,000	7,000,000
Egypt and Cyrenaica... ...	220,000†	6,000,000
Totals	755,000	65,000,000

Total East and West: 1,665,000 square miles; population, 120,000,000.

* Estimates of Population of course vague.
† Habitable area about 30,000 square miles.

TABLE II

THE ROMAN EMPIRE COMPARED WITH OTHER EMPIRES OF THE ANCIENT AND MIDDLE AGES.

		Area, Square Miles.
The Roman Empire	A.D. 395	1,665,000
The Eastern „	„ 565	1,073,000
„ „	„ 800	500,000
„ „	„ 1025	650,000
Babylonian Empire	B.C. 2250	250,000
Egyptian „	„ 1450	450,000
Assyrian „	„ 650	350,000
Lydian „	„ 560	150,000
Persian „	„ 480	2,250,000
Alexandrian „	„ 323	2,150,000
Indian „	„ 250	1,600,000
Chinese „	„ 210	800,000
Carthaginian „	„ 220	250,000
Parthian „	A.D. 1	1,150,000
New Persian „	„ 550	1,450,000
Abbasid Khalifate	„ 750	3,000,000
Ummeyad „	„ 750	200,000
Frankish Empire	„ 810	505,000

TABLE III

THE TERRITORIAL FLUCTUATIONS OF THE EASTERN EMPIRE.

UNDER THEODOSIUS II., CIRCA A.D. 422.

Direct Rule.	Square Miles.	Indirect Rule and Influence.	Square Miles.
Balkan Peninsula...	165,000	Cherson	3,000
Asia Minor, etc. ...	260,000	Isauria	20,000
Syria and Mesopotamia	100,000	Lazica	15,000
Egypt	220,000		
	745,000		38,000

Total: 783,000 square miles.

TABLE III—*Continued*

Under Justinian I., circa A.D. 560.

Direct Rule.	Square Miles.	Indirect Rule and Influence.	Square Miles.
Balkan Peninsula...	165,000	Cherson	3,000
Asia Minor, etc. ...	280,000	Lazica	15,000
Syria and Mesopotamia	100,000	Abasgia	15,000
Egypt	220,000	Ghassan	30,000
Dalmatia	20,000		
Italy	100,000		
Africa	90,000		
Spain	35,000		
	1,010,000		63,000

Total: 1,073,000 square miles.

Under Constantine VI., circa A.D. 770.

Direct Rule.	Square Miles.	Indirect Rule and Influence.	Square Miles.
Balkan Peninsula...	125,000	Abasgia, etc. ...	20,000
Asia Minor, etc. ...	243,000	Iberia, etc.	30,000
Dalmatia and Italy	37,000	Cherson	3,000
		Croatia and Servia...	42,000
	405,000		95,000

Total: 500,000 square miles.

Under Constantine VIII., circa A.D. 959.

Direct Rule.	Square Miles.	Indirect Rule and Influence.	Square Miles.
Balkan Peninsula...	115,000	Croatia and Servia...	35,000
Italy and Dalmatia	25,000	Armenia and Abasgia, etc.	50,000
Cherson	5,000		
Asia Minor ...	240,000		
Armenia, Colchis, etc.	35,000		
	420,000		80,000

Total: 500,000 square miles.

TABLE III—*Continued*

Under Basil II., circa A.D. 1024.

Direct Rule.	Square Miles.	Indirect Rule and Influence.	Square Miles.
Balkan Peninsula...	165,000	Croatia	15,000
Italy, Dalmatia and Servia, etc. ...	50,000	Iberian States ...	60,000
Cherson and Khazaria	10,000	Mesopotamia ...	15,000
Asia Minor ...	250,000	Syria	15,000
Armenia and Colchis	60,000		
Syria and Mesopotamia	10,000		
	545,000		105,000

Total: 650,000 square miles.

Under Manuel I., circa A.D. 1180.

Direct Rule.	Square Miles.	Indirect Rule and Influence.	Square Miles.
Balkan Peninsula...	165,000	Hungary	105,000
Dalmatia, Servia, Croatia and Slavonia	45,000	Christian Syria ...	20,000
Cherson and Colchis	25,000	Iberian States ...	50,000
Asia Minor (including South Armenia)	155,000		
	390,000		175,000

Total: 565,000 square miles.

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